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TROUT LORE

· O · W · SMITH ·

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TROUT LORE

A TYPICAL TROUT BROOKLET

"And now you shall see me try my skill to catch a trout, and at my next walking, either this evening or tomorrow morning, I will give you direction how you yourself shall fish for him."—*Walton*

TROUT LORE

BY

O. W. SMITH

ANGLING EDITOR OF "[illegible]"

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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TO

MR. JAMES A. McGUIRE

EDITOR AND OWNER OF "OUTDOOR LIFE"

SPORTSMAN

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY AND
AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

FIRST of all I desire to thank the Editor and Owner of *Outdoor Life* for the privilege of publishing these papers. I desire here to thank both the talented authors and courteous publishers for permission to use brief quotations from the following books: Wm. C. Harris' "Trouts of America," Macmillan Co.; H. P. Wells' "Fly Rods and Fly Tackle," Harper and Bros.; Alexander's "Log of the North Shore Club" and Dr. Breck's "Way of the Woods," G. P. Putnam's Sons; Henry Van Dyke's, "Fisherman's Luck," Charles Scribner's Sons. No angling library could be considered complete without all these works, to which should be added "American Food and Game Fishes." Undoubtedly my writing has been colored by other books, but to my knowledge these books are the only ones quoted.

O. W. SMITH.

FOREWORD

I AM an angler, not a crass fisherman. While I can say without a smack of conceit that I take my share of trout, it is not the fish that calls me a-field, rather the invitation of the purling brooks, the woo of God's Out-o'doors. All of which is more or less definitely set forth in the following chapters.

As first planned this book was to deal only with "trout lore," but the task grew upon my hands until it assumed the present form. Originally the chapters appeared in *Outdoor Life,* the writer preparing them with no thought of book issue; but so many requests came to him to have the work produced in permanent and "get-at-able" form that he could do no less than comply. The work of revising has been a labor of love, even as the first writing was truly enjoyable. Few changes have been necessary, so firmly grounded is the writer in his notions regarding angling for trout.

Naturally the author has been criticized for some of his assertions, which was to have been

expected. Anglers are proverbially opinionated, and the writer is an angler. I beg my readers to remember that the findings set down in these pages are but those of one angler, true for the fishing done by him. When good Dr. Breck takes me to task for saying in Chapter 4 that trout do not leap on a slack line, asserting that in his locality they do, I can only reaffirm, that I have never seen them do it. In my experience, the rainbows only—salmon trout—go into the air when given sufficient line. A taut line will bring a speckled trout to the surface, but leap he will not, unless actually pulled out of the water. Which is not saying that Dr. Breck's trout do not leap free of the water. This incident illustrates the point I beg my readers to bear in mind: this book contains the findings of one humble follower of Izaak Walton, nothing more.

I have tried to cover the whole subject of trout angling and do not want to be understood as recommending some of the methods mentioned. The chapter on fly tying is in nowise complete; simply a suggestion, nothing more. The author has had his say regarding how to fashion fuzzy wuzzy lures in another series of papers.

I send the work out upon the sea of books with fear and trembling. I confess to little literary skill, but a great love for speckled trout.

THE AUTHOR.

Washburn, Wis.
January, 1917.

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TROUT LORE

TROUT LORE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THERE is no fish so whimsical and notional as the speckled trout, though, parenthetically, he is not a trout at all, but a char, a little matter which our English cousins continually force home upon us. However, trout or char, *Salmo fontinalis,* "living in springs," forever will remain an unsolved riddle. Yes, "an unsolved riddle," for just as we think we know all about the fish's ways, habits and tricks, lo, we fain must unlearn a goodly portion of our knowledge and begin all over again. I have made a careful study of *fontinalis* for twenty years, not only as a fisherman with fly-rod in hand but also as a simple lover of Nature, lying for hours, belly-down, by the side of some woodland spawning bed. Also my study shelves are adorned with tomes and tomes, the accumulated wisdom of lovers of the gentle art from Father Izaak down to the pres-

ent time; yet after much study and observation I am ready to confess that I know little regarding this finical captivating fish. I am not one who concludes an ichthyic article with *ita est* and I regard with suspicion the statements of those who do, fearing lest they have not secured sufficient knowledge to discover their own ignorance. What shall appear hereinafter will be my own conclusions based upon personal observation, true of the streams fished and studied by me. Primarily this is not to be a study of tackle, though naturally one may not talk upon trout from the angler's view-point without referring often to the tools of the craft. Therefore as a key to these papers we may quote kind hearted Walton: "And now you shall see me try my skill to catch a trout, and at my next walking, either this evening or to-morrow morning, I will give you direction how you yourself shall fish for him."

I well remember the first speckled trout I caught. I was but a mere boy, a slight fuzz upon the upper lip indicating that some day, Fates smiling, I might grow to man's estate. Note, I was at the age when to say *ita est* was very easy. The captain of the fishing party of which I was a member was no mean ichthyologist and an expert with a trout rod. When upon approaching

the stream he offered to bet the cigars that he would capture a trout in less than five minutes I was surprised, for I had understood that speckled trout were among the wariest of fish. With my eyes upon the trout expert, I walked up to a highway bridge which spanned the creek we were to fish, and dropped my hook, baited with a worm, into the water with a resounding splash. It happened that I had made little noise in my approach and that a vagrant breeze took charge of my bait and swung it back under the bridge. Instantly there was a great commotion and a sharp tug upon my line. A second later an eight-inch sparkling fish went sailing through the air, striking in the dust of the highway with a resounding "thud." I had caught the first trout, beating the expert by full four minutes. Instantly the *ita est* of fuzzy youth came to the surface. I knew all about trout fishing. The slyness of the fish had been over-rated, the skill required on the part of the angler overestimated. Alas for me! I fished two long weary days and not until the evening of the second did I capture another trout, then it was a little immature fingerling which I returned to the water with great disgust. The other members of the party all caught trout, the expert landing one that weighed over two pounds,

but I caught only a lesson, a lesson however that was to stand me in good stead in after years. In time I learned how to angle for speckled trout, though as I have already said, not even yet do I know it all.

Just how to organize my "Trout Lore" is something of a problem. It would be a pleasure to simply set down the facts as they come to mind, or as I have them recorded in my score and more of note books, but such heterogeneous, unrelated facts are of little value; therefore I must caption my papers in such a way as to make them intelligible to the angler, and more important, get-at-able. A vast amount of valuable information is obscured in the many words of the average book upon angling, lost to the reader because un-get-at-able. Who has not said to himself, "Now where did I read something regarding the influence of weather upon trout fishing?" or, "Where was it that fellow said he had found the Silver Doctor a good fly in dark water?" Now, it shall be my purpose to caption these chapters in such way that the particular information you desire will be easily found. Naturally, following out such a scheme there will be much repetition, but each chapter will be complete in itself and, I hope, reasonably

readable. I do not ask any one to agree with me; indeed, I rather expect to be disagreed with, for in some cases my findings have been at variance with those of the accepted savants. I only ask you to remember that what you find in these chapters is the opinion of one humble follower of Izaak Walton and a lover of trout.

I have reached a place in my angling experience when I am ready to let X, the sign of the Unknown Quantity, stand for the denizens of our cold streams and noisy brooklets. Just what trout will do under a given condition no mere fisherman knoweth. In that delightful poem of Lowell's, "The Courtin'," you remember the verse that runs on this-wise:

"To say why gals acts so or so,
Or don't, 'ould be persumin';
Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*
Comes nateral to women."

Perhaps, as has been asserted, that statement is a libel on the gentler sex; be that as it may, the verse has always described the ways of a trout to me: the most uncertain, whimsical and altogether unreliable fish that swims. To me this very unreliability places trout-fishing in a class by itself and makes it the most attractive of all

angling. I have found trout taking an entirely different fly and acting in a wholly different manner even in contiguous streams and upon the same day. We have all had strange experiences with flies, taking some of our best fish on a fly so worn as to be unlike anything found in tackle catalogs, certainly unlike anything in nature. We have been fishing when the trout seemed fairly ravenous, striking at almost anything cast upon the surface of the water, then in an instant going to the bottom and refusing to rise to the most tempting lure or bait. We have found days when artificial flies were unavailing, and we have found days also when even the reliable "garden hackle" was unavailing, the only lure being some particular fly. I remember once fishing a stream for a week where the only bait, lure, or fly that was at all successful was a black one. "Why?" Ask me something easy; for as far as I could see there were no black flies flitting over the water. Personally I am not much of a believer in "pattern," depending more upon "size"—a matter which I will go into when the proper time comes. So now I will leave the subject with this general introduction, devoting my next chapter to history and literature.

(When a friend of mine heard that I was pre-

paring a series of papers upon "Trout Lore" he said, "I suppose that will be the last word upon the topic." No; the last word will not be written until men cease to angle for speckled trout and to disagree as to his habits and the proper tackle to use. Each of us will add our little to the vast amount of information which is being gathered year by year. Each year I change my mind regarding some things; and I wish to say that the matter contained in the following chapters is always subject to revision.)

CHAPTER II

A PAGE OF NATURAL HISTORY

THIS is in nowise a scientific work, nor yet is it a treatise upon the multitudinous varieties of trouts and chars. There are many books upon the latter subject; even the present writer has had his say in "The Salmon and Trout of America." This, as set forth in the Introduction, is primarily a popular description of the ways of the eastern brook trout, though nearly everything set down here as true of the eastern fish may roughly be applied to his western relatives. So while we do not plan to be dryly scientific, yet a few general remarks regarding the brook trout's history may not be out of place and will clear the ground for the chapters to follow. Be it said, the angler who knows most regarding the life histories of the fish he seeks derives the greatest enjoyment from his days a-stream. It is evermore true that we get out of fishing—life too, as for that—just what we put into it. When we understand something

of the origin of this fish, 'way back there in the beginning, a new respect is born in us for the sly denizen of our cold brooks and mountain rills.

It is thought by those wise in such things that the life-history of the Salmonidæ dates back to the far-off Tertiary Period. Before the great glacier came pushing and grinding down out of the Northland, the lakes and streams of the Western Hemisphere swarmed with members of the salmon family; they were *the* fish of this continent. Then when that resistless ice-foot came plowing its way along, it goughed out and destroyed the ichthyic aristocrat's home, compelling some to take refuge in underground waterways, and pushing still others out into salt-water where they became habilitated and are known to us as sea-trout and salmon. That there is a greater river system, or systems, beneath the earth's surface than upon its crust is believed by all geologists; that those subterranean streams have played an important part in the distribution of fish is attested by the fact that many fish—not blind fish such as make their home in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, but sunfish, goggle-eyes, cat-fish, etc., etc.—are from time to time discharged through vents from these underground waters. I think it is conceded that

members of the salmon family are never found in waters of subterranean origin, but we must remember that trout belong to an age antedating that of our common freshwater species, so the underground waters had accomplished their mission with them before the latter put in an appearance.

Of course many questions impossible of answer arise, dealing as we are with remote ancient history, but enough has been said to indicate something of the supposed past of these beautiful fish—sufficient, I think, to increase our interest in their pursuit and capture. Pushed into new waters, shut away from others of their kind, they gradually adopted themselves to their new environment, and as century after century rolled by, a change was manifested in form and color. Take, as a striking illustration, the golden trout of California. "Why," some one may ask, "do we not see these changes taking place?" Perhaps we do, but so gradually does Nature work that the life of a man is as nothing. You will remember the word of the Hebrew poet, "With God one day is as a thousand."

However, trout have not remained where the ice-age left them but through many causes have found new habitats; the work of distribution still

goes on. A freshet often carries fish over some natural barrier, where, if conditions are favorable, they flourish. And man is forever introducing trout into new localities. To-day we are catching two and three species of fish from the same stream; even in some of our best trout streams not only are the eastern brook trout found, but rainbow from the West, and German trout from over the water—the last two of course true salmons. So we have the Loch Leven, those bonnie fish of Scotland, here in the United States. Not only have the western trout traveled east but the eastern trout have journeyed west; whether or not the result will be a hybrid, some strange new fish, remains to be seen.

However, as pointed out before, there is not much difference whether we angle for rainbow or speckled trout, the methods and tactics are practically the same.

There is no doubt but that a cyclone sometimes does scoop up fish and deposit them again in adjacent waters where they multiply and replenish the water; still it is of a single bird as a transporter of fish that I would speak—the common pelican, found from our southern boundary to the sub-arctic regions. I will never forget sitting one day by a little lake in the

Middle West dreaming an idle hour away. While sitting there partially concealed by the shrubbery, a pelican alighted on the beach just below me and proceeded to empty his "bread basket" preparatory to a meal. Thinking that some of the disgorged fish showed signs of life, I rushed out upon the ungainly bird and frightened him from his repast. Imagine my surprise when I discovered two live fish, both of them yellow perch, and one dead fish, a *speckled trout,* which had not long been dead. Where the bird found the trout I can not imagine, for I knew of no trout streams in that region. Now, had the live fish been the trout, a pair, and had they flopped into the water— Yes, I think the pelican plays a greater part in the economy of nature as a fish car than we have imagined.[1]

While upon the distribution of trout it might be well to spend a little time discussing the advisability of the indiscriminate planting of rainbow and brown trout in water inhabited by and adapted to the eastern variety. Now I know that many eminent authorities disagree with me, saying that rainbow in captivity are not so much

[1] Somewhere I have read a scientific dissertation upon this question, but I can not find it, and readers of these articles will confer a great favor upon the writer if they will inform him where such matter may be obtained.

addicted to a fish diet as are the eastern trout; all of which I do not deny; but in my experience as a mere fisherman I have found rainbow taking minnows more often than their eastern relative. On the Peshtigo River in Wisconsin, where the rainbow grow to a large size, I have found live shiner minnows the best bait, as I have pointed out again and again through the sporting press of America. Recently I spent a month on the Pine River of Waushara County, Wisconsin, a natural speckled trout stream into which the rainbow are gradually being introduced. Ten years ago one seldom caught a rainbow in that water; this summer nearly one-half of the fish taken from its upper reaches were rainbow. But let me quote from my Journal:

Aug. 7th, 1913. Fished down to Bridge with little response, though at the outset I thought the day was going to prove a hummer. . . . At hole below the "island," where I have always expected a strike but have always been disappointed, I worked the bait—a grasshopper—down under an overhanging bank. Instantly a two-pound rainbow took the offering with a grand rush, bending my newly spliced rod double and breaking it again. Throwing aside the useless tool, I took the line in hand, and hand over hand—a la small boy—dragged the fighter in. When near my feet the fish disgorged a five-inch speckled trout, which flew well

into the air. . . . When I eviscerated the fish I found two speckled trout in its stomach, one partially decomposed, the other not yet acted upon by the digestive juices. . . .

Note that this rainbow had recently captured three small fish, all of which were speckled trout, probably because small speckled trout were more numerous than small rainbow. But the point I make is this: the fish feeding so largely upon minnows was a rainbow. By diligent inquiry of the fishermen met on the stream I found they all inclined to the notion that rainbow are more largely fish eaters than the speckled trout. I much doubt the wisdom of planting the two fish in water adapted to speckled trout. The rainbow will thrive in water of a higher temperature than the eastern fish, a fact which recommends him to water not suited to the former. As to game qualities, I think the rainbow has the better of the argument—but more of that in a later chapter; but I must say, in passing, the speckled trout is the peer of his co-inhabitant when he comes to the pan.

CHAPTER III

NUPTIAL DRESS AND ETIQUETTE

ANY angler who has fished for the eastern brook trout along toward the fag end of the season, when the ripened leaves of the sumac begin to whisper of frosts to come, knows full well what I mean by "nuptial dress." Is there in Nature a creature more beautiful than *Salvelinus fontinalis* when on courting bent? Then, if ever, he deserves the appellation, "flower of fishes." What August angler has not heard the phrase, "glow of the trout"? No one who has taken the fish late in the season will quarrel with that word "glow"; for actually the body is possessed of an irradiate brilliancy impossible of description. Then, too, the *texture* of the skin is somehow different from other fishes, a condition to be expressed only by the word "velvety." To me fishing for brook trout is comparable only to picking violets in the springtime; and I have much the same feeling when I behold a basket of carefully packed and preserved speckled trout that I have when I see

a generous bowl of native violets on the drawing-room table. No, I am not going to attempt the impossible and describe a trout garbed in nuptial robes; I leave that task for the poet and painter.

We who have angled much for the speckled beauties have learned through experience to seek them as the Open Season wanes well up towards the headwaters of streams; indeed, even little, unimportant confluents, possessed of scarce six inches of water save in seldom pools, will turn out pound fish and even better. To those unacquainted with the habits of this lover of the rills the size of the fish sometimes taken from the little creeks will be a matter of surprise. Only last season, along toward the last days of August, I was fishing in a certain famous trout stream with but meager results; then one day I made my way to a distant hay-marsh where I knew a little spring creek found its source—a stream so small and unimportant as not to have "honorable mention" upon the maps. One could not much wonder that the map-makers had missed the stream altogether; for rods at a time it made its way beneath the ground, and when its waters did smile up at the glaring sky it was through an opening only a few inches wide. Yet from that creek I took six fish, each the

exact replica of the first, in size and beauty equaling anything taken from the larger stream. Perhaps had I remained longer I might have doubled or even tripled the catch; but six were all I could use and to take more would have been to have laid myself open to a certain charge which I hope I never justly deserved. Perhaps those fish were simply seeking colder water, but their brilliant coloring seemed to indicate that the reproductive instinct was strong upon them.

Late in the fall I have found large fish away up where there was not sufficient water to cover their back fins, and have lain for hours watching their interesting courtship. Even a stream apparently possessed of only a few fish will turn out an unbelievable number during the spawning season. It is this habit of the trout, ever seeking waters higher up as the season wanes, that leads the experienced fly-fisherman to visit the pool above when he misses large fish in a pool before-time inhabited. But the fishing of the little streams deserves a chapter by itself, and those interested in such fishing will find the matter more fully treated in chapter ten.

Perhaps nowhere will we find a better description of a trout courtship than in "The Trouts of America," by Mr. William C. Harris,

than whom no ichthyological writer is more competent to write. He says: "Arrived at the spawning grounds in October or later on, the female shapes with industrious care a little nest in the gravel, fanning it clean with her tail and removing the larger pebbles in her mouth; the male, all the while, moving slowly and gracefully above, below, and around his mate, as if to let her see and admire the gorgeous bridal robe of olive velvet and gold with which nature has adorned him. After displaying for a few moments with natural vanity the beauty of his nuptial array, approaches her, rubs his body against her side; and soon after she enters the nest, emits a few eggs, which the male fertilizes by ejecting milt upon them. This process continues until the reproductive act is ended. Scarcely five per cent. of the ova of the female is productive, owing to several causes, the main one being the destruction of the eggs by the hordes of minnows and other spawn eating animals; the trout, both male and female, leaving the ova unprotected immediately after spawning."

Numbers of trout are taken during the spawning season, for then the opportunities for the poacher are almost unlimited. The fish are in shallow water and almost unprotected and can

easily be speared and shot. Indeed one who understands the fish's ways can even take them in his hands, though only the knowing can do so. Again and again I have visited trout streams during the spawning season only to find the banks of open pools well ornamented with empty rifle and shot-gun shells. Of course it would be very easy to net the fish, and no doubt numbers are so taken. One reason why many streams remain practically unprotected is because that in the Middle West October and November are the open months for hunting and the game wardens are busy elsewhere; but I am persuaded that some time could be advantageously spent by the wardens guarding the trout streams. The illegal fisherman is bad enough at any time, but when he becomes a fish-murderer he deserves no sympathy or consideration. Why, in mercy's name, continue to plant fry if we are not going to protect the adult fish when they most need protection?

CHAPTER IV

COMPARATIVE MERITS OF CHAR AND SALMON TROUTS

ONE might propound some such question as this, "When is a trout not a trout?" And the answer would be, "When it is a char." In truth, our far-famed lover of cold streams is not a true trout: that is, a member of the salmon family. If the shade of Izaak Walton were to accost an angler on his way home from a trout brooklet and peep into his basket—supposing the angler's quest had not been altogether fruitless—the spirit of that angler of other days and other streams might remark somewhat upon this-wise: "Friend, callest thou these fish trout? Methinks they resemble what I was wont to name chars in the days of long ago when I fished the streams of Merrie England." And the angler of to-day, if at all wise in ichthyic lore, would be compelled to admit that his trout were not trout at all but chars.

The brook-trout is closely related to that fish of the market sometimes called Mackinaw trout,

BROWN TROUT (*True Trout*), right; BROOK TROUT (*Char*), left.

PLAYING A RAINBOW

"The salmon is a resourceful gymnast, fond of swift water, and quick to take advantage of the opportunities it offers."—*Page 25*

or Great Lakes trout, while further north it is know by its Indian name, Namaycush; also our sly lover of the rills is first cousin to the seldom fish, Sunapee trout, as well as that famous fish of the West, the Dolly Varden. In all, there are fifteen chars in America, though the speckled trout alone may be called common. The angler should bear in mind, however, that the char is more highly organized than are the salmon trouts, a wee bit more aristocratic; and since the Fish Commissions have planted and interplanted trout and chars, it is well for the angler to be able to tell the difference between the two species.

First, then, the size of the scales are a certain mark of identification; those of the char being so fine and deeply imbedded in the skin as often to be almost microscopical; indeed, one not seldom hears the eastern brook trout spoken of as a "scale-less fish"—which of course is not true. Upon the other hand, all members of the salmon tribe are possessed of definite scales—scales that can be seen with the eye and removed with the finger. A large rainbow I caught some years ago had to be scaled before we placed it in the fry-pan. Another matter, the chars alone are possessed of vermiculations—"worm tracks"—

upon the back; the salmon trouts are spotted, not vermiculated. The only red-spotted trout in eastern waters with which the angler might confuse the char is the so-called German brown, of which the two former statements regarding salmon trouts hold true; also the red spots upon the "Dutchman" are large and nearly always above the median line, splashed on without order, while the spots upon *fontinalis* are nearly always below the median line, regularly placed, and about the size of a pin-head. Lastly, if still in doubt regarding a given specimen, just insert your finger in the fish's mouth and your doubts will vanish. In all salmon trouts a double row of teeth run down the central bone or vomer, as the fish-wise call it, while the char boasts of no teeth on the front part of the vomer. The latter fact alone is enough to bear in mind, for it is upon such anatomical differences that the ichthyologists depend for identification.

Every angler has noticed how the color of chars varies from dark to light, even among fish from the same creek, though often there is a likeness between the fish from any given stream. I know streams from which one seldom secures those dark fish, while from others none but dark fish are taken. I have noticed that slow-moving,

sluggish streams, such as make their way through mucky soil, are almost certain to turn out fish black as Erebus, with brilliant red spots and highly colored under parts. Last summer, fishing a confluent of a certain well-known trout stream, I took several fish, all so dark that one might be pardoned for thinking them members of another family from those of the main stream. I have noticed also that fish from rapid streams, water broken by many rocks and falls, are apt to be of a pale washed-out color, sometimes almost silvery. The deeply colored chars are of aldermanic proportions, short and thickset; while usually the silvery fish are slim and attenuated. Naturally it follows that the latter fish are the best fighters, trained to activity by their habitat, fighting near the surface and dashing through the rapid water with an unbelievable speed. The dark-colored fish, sluggish and logy, fight below the surface, rooting beneath snags and off under over-hanging banks, tugging away with all of a bull-dog's perversity and grim stick-to-itiveness. The latter fish are tackle testers. Once, when fishing Pine River, Wisconsin, a number of years ago, I took what I considered an albino speckled trout; at least it was marked just like *fontinalis* save that it was of a

beautiful silvery white, of unbelievable and unimagined brilliance. Strange to say, when I reached home at night I could not pick out that fish from the rest: its wonderful coloring had faded absolutely. But I am fully persuaded that was not a dream.

Given a one-pound fish, nine times out of ten an experienced angler can tell within one minute after it is hooked whether it is a char or a true trout. There is no question in my mind but that the introduced fish, the salmon, is in all game points the peer of the native char. There is a dash, a "go," about the former not possessed by the latter. One sometimes reads of a speckled trout leaping from the water when hooked, dancing on its tail, etc.—an absolute falsehood I believe. I have been a careful trout fisher for twenty-five years and I have yet to see my first speckled trout leap from the water *on a slack line;* true, the angler can jerk them from the water by main strength—even a bullhead when it comes to that—but the char will never go into the air of *his own free will.* Upon the other hand, hook a salmon trout, German brown or rainbow, and almost the first thing the fish does is to leap free of the water. Not only once does the true salmon trout go into the air, but two,

three, and even more times. One particularly active rainbow that played with me some seasons ago cleared the water seven times and even when nearly conquered attempted aerial flights. The salmon is a resourceful gymnast, fond of swift water, and quick to take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

Fishing a speckled trout stream a few seasons ago, I hooked a fish, the fifth of the day, and the manner in which it fought, the speed and uncertain quality of its action, reminded me of the rainbow; when at last it went into the air, well out toward the end of a hundred feet of line, I knew it was never a char. It proved to be a rainbow, or "red-sides," an introduced fish.

A brook trout is not possessed of the speed and resourcefulness of a salmon, though the char puts up a long and well sustained battle. I think it true that the char of about a pound weight is more active than the heavier fish. The large fish depends upon its weight rather than activity.

But when we place the two fish in a fry-pan, the char has the best of the argument: there is no comparison between a char and salmon when brought to the table. The former is firmer fleshed, not so oily, and sweeter. I have tried

out various species of western and two foreign trouts, always with the same result: namely, a preference for the char. I am under the impression that one would grow weary of the salmon before he would of the char, though personally I have never fed to satiation upon either. I have fed once a day for thirty days upon the brook beauties, and at the end of the time found them tasting just as good as at first. So, hear the conclusion of the matter: salmon trout for sport, but brook trout, i.e., char, for the table.

CHAPTER V

TROUT AND THE WEATHER

EVER since Noah looked out of the Ark each morning and asked, "Is it still raining?" weather has been the paramount subject of discussion. In city or country, by radiator or camp-fire, it is always our first and last resort in conversation. To the angler no topic is of greater importance than this hackneyed one of weather, for upon it, he thinks, hinges the fortunes of his day a-stream. Be it far from me to shatter the idols of any brother of the angle, or to simply run amuck amid fishing traditions, but I think the importance of mere weather has been much overrated. Have we not all heard from youth up: "Fish bite best when it rains," "Fish will not rise in a thunderstorm," "It is useless to fish for trout when the sun shines full on the stream," etc., etc. In fact, if we were to believe *all* that we hear as to *when* to fish, we never would cast fly or boat, for, to borrow an old saw, weather which is "one man's meat, is another man's poison."

No angling superstition is more prevalent than

the one which asserts that trout will not rise to a fly when the wind is from the east; indeed, so ingrained is the belief that we accept it almost without question, and it is not uncommon to see carved above the angler's fireplace some such statement as, "May the east wind never blow." Away back in Father Izaak's time this question received considerable attention and we hear that gentle scholar say, "You are to take notice, that of the winds the south wind is said to be the best. One observes that—

> 'when the wind is in the south
> It blows your bait into a fish's mouth.'

Next to that, the west wind is believed to be the best: and having told you that the east wind is the worst, I need not tell you which wind is the best in the third degree." Later on, that Nestor of our beloved sport remarks, "He that busies his head too much about them (the winds) if the weather be not made extreme cold by an east wind, shall be a little superstitious: for as it is observed by some, there is no good horse of a bad color, so I have observed that if it be a cloudy day, and not extreme cold, let the wind set in what corner it will, and do its worst, I heed it not."

"Shall be a little superstitious"—I like that. So far as the direction of the wind is concerned, the average trout stream is so crooked that it blows from almost any direction of the compass in a half-mile of the stream's course. The only objection I have to the east wind is that suggested by Father Walton—it is apt to produce cold and nasty days, days when to fish is anything but a pleasure. I feel that trout should be lured only when the weather is as beautiful as the fish. Gentle sunshine, springing flowers, and soft south winds make days a-stream in springtime a delight. Upon the other hand, if I am fishing and the wind whips round into the east, I do not reel in my line and make my way homeward; indeed not! More than once I have made record catches when the wind was blowing a half-gale from the east, the sky overcast with heavy clouds. The secret of the matter is here: if we *think* we can catch trout, we generally can; if we think the weather is against us, we only half fish and lay our failure to the weather.

We sometimes read of record catches of trout being taken when the ground is covered with snow, or the air filled with flying flakes, the only lure used being some sort of an artificial fly. Now I do not know what you will do with me

when I confess that I regard all such stories with suspicion, though they may be true. I hold that it is next to useless to surface fish with flies, and that is the only true fly-fishing, unless insects are to be found hovering above the water. But bait fishing is another matter in early spring. I remember a few years ago going trouting on the fifteenth of April, the opening day in Wisconsin, when snow was fully a foot deep along the stream; yet I made a handsome catch of trout, all on worms. There was little sport in it, though, for my line froze in the guides and tip; again and again I was compelled to thaw out the ice. Now it may be true that those fish would have struck at a bobbing fly, but I could not induce them to do so, and the worms upon which they fed so greedily were swallowed on the bottom. I am glad I had the experience, that's all. As to the legitimacy of bait fishing —well, we will take that much mooted matter up in a later chapter.

As we have all heard from childhood, "trout bite best when it rains," a bit of angling superstition which had its root probably in the fact that the farmer-boy could fish then and not in fair weather. Trout do bite when it rains and rains hard; I have proved it again and again;

the big fellows that lie on the bottom and feed upon the earthworms which the downpouring rain washes into the creek. Such fishing is pre-eminently worm-fishing; the large fish will not as a rule rise to the surface under such conditions —indeed, the water is too roily for a trout to see a fly. For fly-fishing, the best sort of weather is the very best that Nature can manufacture, clear sky with fleecy clouds now and then shutting out the sun. Ofttimes when the sun is dazzlingly brilliant trout will not rise to the feathers, but when a shadow cast by a cloud crosses the water, they will display unusual activity. If the sky be clear and the water placid the angler must employ all the skill he possesses if he hopes not to alarm the fish; but more about hot weather fishing in a later chapter when we shall discuss trout and grasshoppers. This, then, is my conclusion: fair and beautiful weather for this beautiful and fair fish.

Referring again to an ancient belief mentioned before in this chapter, "Trout will not bite during a thunderstorm." The theory is that the reverberations of the thunder cause the earth to tremble and the disturbance is of course communicated to the water and the fish are frightened. It is a very plausible theory. However,

I have proved to my own satisfaction that trout will take both artificial flies and bait during such atmospheric disturbances. I have caught trout on flies again and again when fierce thunder and lightning all but drove me from the stream, though the fish never seemed disturbed in the least; they continued to rise so long as the water remained clear. Some summers ago I was spending a week with the trout of a small creek and one morning Jove seemed to be in an extra angry mood, so I hurried to the stream. The water was turgid and very muddy, so fly-fishing was out of the question, but worms were available and availing. In spite of the awful thunderstorm, one of the worst to which I have ever been exposed, I secured a nice catch and some very large fish. I might have made a record that day had not Jove let fly one of his thunderbolts, smiting a pine stub within ten rods of me, shivering it to atoms. That was too much for my courage. I fled. Yes, trout will bite in a thunderstorm if they are hungry; and I think that is the whole secret—if they are hungry.

Another matter regarding which there is little unanimity of opinion is which portion of the day is best for trout fishing. I think the answer all depends upon the feeding habits of the fish in

FISHING IN THE SNOW

"I remember a few years ago going trouting on the fifteenth of April, the opening day in Wisconsin, when snow was fully a foot deep along the stream."
—*Page 30*

FLY FISHING

"I have become an osteopath. I believe in 'manipulation.'" - *Page 38*

each stream, for I have known streams good in the morning while others, even near, were not at their best until late in the afternoon. It can be set down as a general rule that trout fishing is seldom good at midday. Personally I am not an advocate of early rising; I have never made much of a catch before seven o'clock in the morning. Probably it would be different in lake fishing, but of that I may not speak from wide experience. From seven to eleven, and again from three to night-fall are my favorite periods of the day. When it comes to night fishing—but that deserves a separate chapter and will be treated later. After all, good Father Izaak's word, quoted in opening this chapter, "There is no good horse of a bad color," is as applicable to the time of day as to the weather. Good weather is when trout bite, speaking from the fisherman's view-point.

CHAPTER VI

FLY-FISHING FOR TROUT

TROUT are preeminently the fly-fisherman's fish. True, other fish, almost any fish, will upon occasion rise to the challenge of the feathers, from humble "pumpkin-seeds" up through the long list to great northern pike; but, even so, it is the wild, winsome wonder of the brooklets which is most often sought, even as it was because of him that fishing with artificial flies came into existence. It would be interesting to know who first used the "counterfeit presentment" to lure speckled beauties from their watery home; we only know that the art had its rise in pre-Waltonite days, away back in ancient Greek and Roman times fly fishing was practised very much as it is to-day. If time sufficed or we dared sufficiently elongate this paragraph, we would enjoy tracing out the history of fly-making and fly-fishing, beginning our study away back beyond the days of Jesus Christ, perhaps three hundred or more years before his birth; but that

may not be. Only remember this, fly-fishing was hoary with age before the wise and pious prioress of the Benedictine nunnery of Topwell wrote her treatise on "hawkynge, huntynge and fysshynge." Think of the following words when next you fasten a red hackle to your leader: "In the begynning of Maye a good flye, the body of reddyd wull and lappid abowte wyth blacke silke; they wynges of the drake of the redde capons hakyll." No, fly-fishing is by no means a modern sport.

In a word the theory of the artificial fly is simply to duplicate the appearance and action of the living winged insect. However, two schools have arisen. The first, known as colorists, insist that all that is necessary is to duplicate the colors of the natural fly; the second school, the formalists, insist with equal emphasis that the proper method to pursue is to duplicate the form and never mind the color. Now, no doubt much can be said upon either side; but the fact of the matter is, he is most wise who occupies a middle-of-the-road course, employing both methods. There are days when "any old fly" will prove attractive, and there are also days when no fly will prove attractive. I have passed through experiences which have converted me to the colorist

school, but always those experiences have been followed by others which have reconverted me to the formalist faith, and vice versa. I have about come to the conclusion that to change from a large fly to a small one, or from a small fly to a smaller, is as apt to produce net results as to change colors and pattern. In my experience the smaller fly is as a rule the successful one. Do not worry over many types of flies; a half dozen standard patterns in various sizes will prove ample. Time was when I thought it absolutely necessary to have every known product of the fly-tier's art in my stock book; to-day I am satisfied with a meager half dozen or so. While I pay attention to both form and color there is something which I believe is of greater importance.

I have become an osteopath, I believe in "manipulation." More depends upon the man behind the fly than upon the fly itself, granting of course that the fly should be what the Irishman called "dacent." The problem of the fly-fisher as stated by Mr. Wells is:

"1st. To place the fly within reach of the trout without alarming it.

2d. To handle it so as to simulate a living creature, and one tempting its appetite.

3d. To do this in such a manner that if the fly is touched, the trout shall infallibly be fastened."

This may well be called the gospel of fly-fishing; but how to do it—ah, there's the rub. Not every angler learns to obey the first rule even; and when it comes to the third, who can say, "This law have I kept from my youth up." That delicate handling of the fly, that quick response to a rising fish, neither can be taught on paper; the best school for the would-be fly-fisherman, is the school of experience, actual fishing on a trout stream. I have cast by the hour upon the back lawn, to the great amusement of passersby and the abject terror of the house dog, but I am ready to assert that I have derived more real benefit by following an expert handler of flies in actual fishing. No doubt much can be gained by dry-land practise after one knows how to handle the lures, but before—well, to my mind it is something like learning to swim in the drawing-room. When Horace Greeley was asked how the Government was to set about resuming specie payment, he tersely replied, "The way to resume is to resume." Do not make any mistake about the matter, the way to learn to handle fuzzy-wuzzy lures is just to handle them. Perhaps some day you will find yourself without

worms or bait of any kind, with only a few bedraggled flies in your book which you have carried for show; then you will fall to and use them, and lo, all at once a fish will be hooked: you will have become a fly-fisher.

Later on I am going to devote a chapter to the matter of flies, pattern, size, manufacture, etc., but here I give a list of a possible half-dozen which should prove successful anywhere, any time. Remember, this is just one fellow's list. No. 1, Professor. No. 2, Coachman. No. 3, Brown Hackle. No. 4, Beaverkill. No. 5, Silver Doctor. No. 6, Scarlet Ibis. I would have these tied on Nos. 10, 12, and 14 hooks, with perhaps a few on No. 8 for use if those large ones of which we dream are rising. You understand my position: three sizes of each pattern, and I would not think of going with less than three of a size. This is my list, and now, "Lay on, Macduff, and—"

It is too bad, but in a work of this character we must dismiss the matter of tackle with little better than a word. Probably more has been written regarding rods than flies—which is saying that no mere man can read it all. My trenchant is for a split bamboo rod of the best grade possible to afford, for it seems to me there

is nothing equaling the quick response and fine action of the thoroughbred bamboo. Next comes the solid woods; then the steel. For small creeks, a rod not over eight feet long and weighing in the neighborhood of three ounces. For large streams, say ten feet and weighing up to seven ounces. The lighter rod will handle a fly better than the heavier one.

The reel for fly-fishing is the single action; on heavier rods and for heavier fishing the automatic may be used. The reel is nothing more than a container for the line in average fly-fishing and is used but little in playing the fish.

As to line, double tapered G, if you can afford it; if not, the best simple enameled you can. And when we come to the leader, again I urge the best. I am not an advocate of overly long leaders, thinking that they interfere somewhat in landing the fish; I limit them to four feet.

So much for fly-fishing tackle. We should have spent a whole chapter discussing it; but it will be mentioned later when we take up fishing particular waters.

Personally I desire three flies when fishing with those fuzzy-wuzzy lures; not because I desire to take two fish at a cast, though there is rare sport in successfully playing two trout at once, but be-

cause the dropper fly is often successful when the end fly proves unattractive. However, the use of more than one fly is frowned upon in some quarters and is prohibited by law in at least one State, so I perforce am learning to be content with one. As dry-fly fishing is becoming more and more popular we will find it less difficult to be content with a single fly, as one only can be used in dry-fly fishing, properly so called, which will be discussed in our next chapter.

The ways of a trout are past finding out, for they are as unstable in their habits as the seaside girl. When trout, especially large fish, are rising lazily and rolling on the surface of the water as it were, they seldom strike at a fly and I much doubt that they are feeding at all. Indeed, large fish seldom strike with vim, while small ones will even shoot above the surface in their efforts to reach the tantalizing bunch of colored feathers. Again, trout seldom rise to flies when the surface is unruffled by a breeze and the noontide sun beats down upon the water. A passing cloud or a vagrant breath of wind will often stir them to life. In swift water the fish usually hooks himself, but in dead water the action of the angler's wrist must be instant and sharp or the fish will not be hooked. In fishing swift water it is best

to fish downstream; while, upon the other hand, in slow streams, where it is possible to make one's way against the current without too much effort, upstream is the proper course to pursue, as fish lie with their heads pointed in the direction of the downcoming food. There are times when in deep water the only way fish can be moved is by using a weighted fly, fishing two feet or so beneath the surface, though it is not fly-fishing *per se*. The old rule holds good still: on light days dark flies, and on dark days light flies. But he who goes forth in the morning sure that he knows the best method of angling, and the proper fly to use, will return at night with an empty creel and a disappointed heart.

CHAPTER VII

A DISSERTATION UPON THE DRY FLY

It is only within the last ten years that dry-fly fishing has come into prominence in this country, and even to-day this method of taking trout is not as well known as it should be. In the year 1911 a series of articles appeared in a well-known outdoor magazine and anglers began to ask among themselves, "Is there any fire behind all this smoke?" We have come to the conclusion that there was and is considerable fire down beneath the smoke of words. Probably the reason dry fly fishing has not been practised to any great extent in this country is because of the character of our streams, as well as the fact that our trout are not so highly "educated" as are those of the much fished chalk streams of England. It may be asserted that dry-fly fishing had its rise with Mr. Halford, author of "Dry-Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice," "Dry-Fly Entomology," and other works, a man of sufficient wealth and leisure to ride a hobby to its stable. His works—and there are a number of them—are

authoritative texts upon the subject. Mr. Halford came to the conclusion that some more scientific method must be devised if the wary trout of the placid chalk streams were to be deceived by "counterfeit presentments"; so, after much study and long experience, he gave to the fishing world the method which will be connected with his name forever.

Naturally a great majority of the books upon the subject are from the English press, therefore hardly adopted as guides in America; still the dry-fly angler should possess himself of at least a few of Halford's works and as many others as he can afford. In order that the would-be convert may know what is best along this line I herewith give the titles of a few books, all of which may be secured of Mr. W. J. Cummings, Bishop, Auckland, England. Beside the two Halford books mentioned above, which sell at 10s. 6d. and 12s. 6d. respectively, I would advise, "Dry-Fly Fishing," by Cotswold Isys, price 1s.; "The Book of the Dry-Fly," by G. A. B. Dewar, price 7s. 6d.; "Dry-Fly Fishing and Salmon Fly Casting," by F. G. Shaw, price 10s. 6d.; "Dry-Fly Fishing For Trout and Grayling," by Red Quill, price 6s. Aside from Halford's books I would urge the would-be dry-flyist to purchase the

book by Dewar, for, while we of America cannot agree with all he says regarding tackle, it is a practical work. Naturally in this country men have been writing upon the topic, and we have "Practical Dry-Fly Fishing," by Emlyn M. Gill, a splendid book and safe guide for the beginner as it is written with that particular individual in mind. The thoughtful angler will agree for the most part in what the author says regarding tackle and the use of it. Then there is "Fishing With Floating Flies," by S. G. Camp, a complete manual which the angler can ill afford to be without. I do not know whether Mr. G. M. L. La Branche has put out a work upon the subject, though I understood that he was planning to do so, but his magazine articles are eminently practical and always helpful.[1]

We are often asked to define the difference between the method of the dry-fly fisherman and that of the wet-fly user. Says Mr. Dewar in his work, "The best short description of the difference between wet and dry-fly fishing is that which describes the first as 'fishing the stream' and the second as 'fishing the rise.'" A statement which fairly clears the ground, though as

[1] Mr. La Branche's material upon the subject now is to be had in "The Dry Fly and Fast Water."

WAITING FOR A RISE

The dry-fly on a tiny brooklet.

WORM FISHING IN APRIL

"I can take you to streams in the Middle West from which it is all but impossible to take a single trout with an artificial fly."—*Page 51*

Mr. M. Gill points out there is no good reason why the dry-fly artist should not fish the stream successfully. In England the dry-fly artist waits for the rise of a fish, then places his floating fly in the center of the wavelets; but again and again I have demonstrated to my own satisfaction that "fishing the stream" is fruitful of results even when no fish appear at the surface. In a word, the method of the dry-fly fisherman is to keep the fly upon the surface of the water; in this he is ofttimes aided by waterproofing his flies with any one of various concoctions. The aim of this modern fly-fisher is to allow his flies to pass over the waiting fish, floating naturally, so that the fish is deceived by the "counterfeit presentment"; therefore he must pay particular attention to his flies. More might be said under this head but in so brief a discussion it is out of the question.

A word regarding the waterproofing of the flies, or more properly fly, for but one is used. Flies become wet, even though the angler makes a number of false casts through the air after each cast upon the water; so, to aid him in his efforts to "keep the feathers dry," he anoints them with any one of various waterproofing liquids known to the trade under several names. Personally I

have come to the conclusion that nothing is better than the patent preparations on the market, though instead of using a feather as some do, I place a little of the liquid in a common nose atomizer and so spray the whole box at once. With care the liquid can be applied with a feather or even with the fingers. If you do not have a sufficient stock of flies to last for a morning's fishing, then you must carry one of the little bottles supplied for the purpose. When I advise the fisherman to buy the prepared "dri-fly," I do so after many sad experiments. If you desire something else, then use the best white paraffin oil such as can be secured from any dealer in paints. Do not forget the "deer's fat" or other grease for the line, that it too may be impervious to moisture. You will have discovered by this time that in dry-fly fishing the premium is placed upon care and thoughtfulness.

I have already mentioned these two methods of fishing, but perhaps I cannot better serve my readers than by elaborating a little. As has been intimated, the dry-fly "purist" waits for a rise before he casts; and we all have a picture of the patient angler crouched upon one knee waiting for the tell-tale ripples. That means an open, placid pool, such as we seldom find in this

country, where our streams are, for the most part, swift and broken with rapids. Always, no matter how swift, we can find little glassy pools where the water sucks down under an overhanging bank, just below up-reaching rocks, etc., etc. Study the surface of any stream for a moment and you will discover many spots just waiting for your fly. One advantage of such fishing is that the broken water between you and the little pool or eddy effectually cuts off the vision of the keen-sighted trout. While there is great sport in "stalking the fish," as is the English method, this modification of the art to American needs also calls for much skill, as the angler must be a past-master of the art of casting in order to hit the little opening. Undoubtedly the proper method is to fish upstream, but we have many creeks so swift that to do so is an absolute impossibility; then, follow down and cast ahead of you—it will work grandly. I have one bit of superstition which has no reason in it: when I see a bit of milky water below rocks or close inshore I always *feel* that it conceals a fish, and it generally does. Now laugh!

We have been talking about tackle almost since we first began this chapter, and to devote a separate paragraph to the subject seems super-

fluous; yet there are a few details which should be taken up before we close. The rod used in England is heavy in comparison with those used in this country. Just how a man can handle an eleven-foot rod that weighs eleven or more ounces is an enigma to some of us; yet we find such tools advised by eminent English anglers. To my notion, a nine-foot, five-ounce rod is plenty heavy enough to lay the line, and such a rod, American-made, is plenty strong enough for any brook trout that ever swam. The line should be double-tapered, if possible, and of the best quality, though the tapering is not absolutely necessary; thirty yards is plenty. Most authorities advocate a long leader, six to nine feet, but here I am a Philistine, for I use one only three, or at the most four, feet long. Why need the leader be six feet long when but a single fly is used? In some of the streams I fish it is absolutely necessary to reel the fish close in before attempting to use the net. Once again, do not forget the bit of deer's fat or tallow for the line. As to hooks, in England the small sizes are popular, running down to even 000; but I am not altogether in favor of this, though, as I have said before, ofttimes the small fly is attractive when the relatively large one fails; however, from Nos.

10 to 14 will, I think, prove about right. As to the reel, nothing need be said, the regular single action being the thing.

In concluding this chapter a list of successful dry-flies should be given, though no two men will agree as to patterns, probably. It is well understood that dry-flies are tied on eyed-hooks, without leaders or snoodes, tied directly to the end of the long leader by a simple knot, easily tied, known as "the turtle." For six flies I would suggest: Coachman, White Millar, Wickham's Fancy, Willow, Olive Dun, and, for good measure, Red Spinner. Such a collection, or rather selection, should meet the needs of ordinary streams; though some anglers will be far from satisfied. Remember again, the flies must be tied true to pattern, as a rule; though I know one angler who ties his own flies and they are not like what we see in the store, yet he is a wonderfully successful fisherman.

CHAPTER VIII

BAIT-FISHING FOR TROUT

I AM not going to apologize for this chapter, as a great many angling writers would, for I hold that under certain conditions bait-fishing for trout is legitimate. Why not? It is the way in which the bait is handled and not the mere fact that the fisherman uses grasshoppers, worms, or something else that determines whether or not he is a sportsman. I can conceive of even a fly-fisherman using his lures in an unsportsmanlike way. The dyed-in-the-wool bait-fisherman, employing light tackle, quitting when he has enough, retiring from the stream with a mental picture of God's Out-o'doors, may hold up his head in any company. I once saw a fly-fisherman taking two small trout at a cast, snailing them in as fast as he could clear his hooks, always eager for the next opportunity; while following along behind was a long-whiskered old farmer with a cane pole and a box of earthworms, now and then taking a fish but always throwing back all but the larger ones. When I passed the dap-

per young "sport," he said, "Gee, but this is great fun!" The old man said, when I passed him, "Pity there ain't a law to kill such durn fish-hogs as that up there." You can draw your own conclusions as to which of the two was a true sportsman.

I have elsewhere said that I much doubt the stories one sometimes reads of big catches being made on artificial flies before a single natural fly has put in an appearance upon the surface of the stream. No doubt a trout can be taken now and then even early in the season before the snow and ice have disappeared, but in my experience good catches have never been made under those conditions. I have never found fly-fishing worth while until the weather has warmed sufficiently to bring into being the first brood of insects.

I can take you to streams in the Middle West from which it is all but impossible to take a single trout with an artificial fly. They are bait streams, because streams where the fish are not in the habit of feeding upon the surface. There are also streams from which it is impossible to take a fish unless your hook is baited with a certain kind of flesh. I know that sounds a little bit like a "fish story" but it is the unvarnished

truth. Think of fishing with such an unorthodox bait as a great piece of chubb flesh; but I had that experience some years ago. Oh, I experimented with every fly and orthodox bait for a fishless week before I resorted to the meat bait. Again, I have fished certain meadow brooklets in midsummer when the only lure that won the big fellows was grasshoppers, and grasshopper-fishing is the nearest approach to fly-fishing of any bait angling with which I am acquainted. So in this chapter I propose to discuss both worm and hopper fishing.

Not every one who uses worms knows the best way of handling them. I like to have the worms dug a few days before the fishing trip and "scoured" in sand; then they are not quite so repulsive though just as "nervous." A single worm on the hook put on in a natural manner I have found more attractive to the fish than several great worms in a lump or wad. Some men seem to think that if one worm is attractive, four will be four times as attractive—which may be good arithmetic but is mighty poor fish sense. Use as much care in baiting up as you would if fastening on artificial flies; it will pay. Worm-fishing is seldom surface fishing, though even

with such bottom bait now and then you will take a trout upon the surface.

I always fish the pool before I get to it. If in an open meadow I cast from a distance of ten or more feet, if possible, and never show myself unless I catch a fish so large and obstreperous that I can neither lift him out by strength of rod or coax him away from his fellows in the pool.

Some years ago I was fishing a stream with a boon companion and luck had been against us all the morning, a cold blustering day in April. Finally my companion became disgusted and suggested that we go home; but I was not satisfied, for I never give up a problem of the kind while daylight lasts. Remembering a deep pool which had attracted me when I first passed, though not even a bite had it rendered me, I retraced my steps until I stood within casting distance. Then, lying down in the brown grass, I cast. Instantly my worm was taken. Lying so, I caught ten fish and I think would have taken more had not my companion blundered up on the other side to see what I was doing.

There are many little kinks of worm-fishing that one learns through experience, employs

automatically when on the stream, but are very hard to tell about on paper. I sometimes think that fishing wisdom is a sort of sixth sense and not to be acquired through instruction. Always when fishing a stream a sharp bend means a deep pool, which, early in the season, is full of fish. Fish such places from above, using a long line; if the trout are "fighting shy," even fish it from the next pool above. Under such conditions I have used two hundred and more feet of line to good purpose. A log deeply submerged always spells trout with golden letters to me. Cast above, 'way above, so that the worm will have a chance to sink to the bottom; then if the current whisks it under and you do not hook something worth while it will be because your stream is literally fished out. An up-turned stump, with sprawling, sprangling roots, always shelters trout, though it also offers safe refuge for them. Cast in such a place and be ready to draw the fish away as soon as he strikes or you will lose the fish and probably some terminal tackle. Where a bunch of foam eddies 'round and 'round, say above a log when the current pulls under, or in a pool between rocks, there you will find fish. The shade of a bridge, especially a low-hanging one, is appreciated by

trout. The more inaccessible a pool, the greater will be your reward providing you have patience. I have opened a way to many a pool just for the joy of the first half-hour's fishing and it is worth all effort.

Reeling for trout is bait-fishing up to date. The baited hook is allowed to travel down with the current, around bends, under low-hanging brush—anywhere the current makes its way the baited hook goes, a wriggling invitation to hungry trout. The fisherman will be surprised to find that two hundred feet of line will pay out with ease. If a fish is hooked away downstream, patience and slow reeling will lead it up through the tortuous course to the waiting net. To reel rapidly is to bring the fish to the surface, where it will leap over submerged brush and escape. To reel a pound trout two hundred feet against the current requires not a little skill, the angler who has never successfully accomplished the trick has an experience in store. Reeling may be practised anywhere, on an open meadow stream when the fish are exceedingly shy, as well as in wood-streams where fly-fishing is out of the question. To my skill in this variety of trout fishing I attribute my large catches when other and better fishermen have failed. It goes with-

out saying that no sinker, not even a single shot, is used.

I must devote a paragraph to the ways of trout in flood time, for sometimes anglers reach the stream when the water is over the banks, dark and murky; to fly-fish is impossible, and bait seems out of the question. At such times the trout congregate in deep pools and lie upon the bottom just gorging themselves with rain-washed worms. After such a saturnalia of greed they will not look at a worm or fly for several days: hence, "Trout feed on a rising stream but not upon a falling." A baited hook cast into such a pool and allowed to sink to the bottom will be seized with avidity, but there is little sport in the fishing, only meat.

One might dismiss the question of tackle for worm-fishing with but a word were it not for the fact that as a rule altogether too heavy tackle is employed. The orthodox bait-rod is overly long, stiff in the back, with reel-seat above the hand. For all worm-fishing save that on little streams, which will be taken up in a later chapter, I use a nine-foot five-ounce fly-rod, with reel-seat below the hand. The reel should be below the hand; you will agree with me after you have become accustomed to the position, though at first

A LIKELY SPOT

"The shade of a bridge, especially a low-hanging one, is appreciated by trout."—*Page 54*

SPINNING

"There are pools on the average trout stream sheltering such fish as the angler dreams about, fish waiting for the man with a spinner, the man who knows how to handle the rod and efface himself "—*Page 62*

it seems awkward. The only reel is one of the four-time multiplying, because in fishing two hundred feet of water you will need to have absolute and instant control of your line. A new reel upon the market, a quadruple without balance handle, is almost perfect. The line can either be regular braided waterproof silk, or enameled; for distance fishing I prefer the former though the enameled is not quite so apt to tangle about roots. For reeling I dispense with the leader, using a snelled hook of rather small size, being sure the line is stronger than the hook, so that if the latter becomes snagged, the line will break it. No sinker should be used. The line should be free to travel and deport itself at the will of the current. (We will discuss other tackle in the chapter on "Fishing Little Streams.")

Grasshopper-fishing is in a class by itself, more nearly approaching fly-fishing than any other method of taking the wily trout. The tackle should be of the lightest. In open streams a three-ounce rod will be the thing; reel, orthodox single action; line, enameled, tapered if possible, seventy-five feet of it, for the proper way is to cast and not reel; leader, three-feet, longer if you wish; hook, small—one of the new "Sure

catch" hooks will prove a saver of 'hoppers. Note, sinker is again left out. I never could understand why some anglers use sinkers in trout fishing: they result in bottom snags, broken hooks, and cuss-words. As to how to handle grasshoppers, I need only say handle them just as you would dry flies. 'Hopper fishing is surface fishing always. Cast from a distance and be ready to strike with the rise of the fish. If in an open pool you find the fish unduly wary, then cast to the edge of the far bank and wait until the memory of the shadow cast by the flying line has departed from the brain of the perdue trout; then with a gentle jerk, cause the 'hopper to fall naturally upon the surface of the water. Few fish, if the angler has kept himself out of sight, can resist that natural hop of the 'hopper. All that was said in the paragraph on kinks for worm-fishers may be studied with profit by the 'hopper-fisherman. Remember that you are dealing with the most wary fish that swims and learn to efface yourself. For best result in 'hopper-fishing you should become so familiar with the stream that it will be unnecessary for you to show yourself until a fish too large to land without the net has been hooked.

I by no means have said the last word upon

bait-fishing, though I have drawn this chapter out to unreasonable lengths, but I have tried in a few words to give you a glimpse of bait-fishing from the best perspective possible.

CHAPTER IX

SPINNING FOR TROUT

IT is a well-known fact that as a rule brook trout are curious regarding any rapidly moving object which happens to pass within range of their vision. To test the truthfulness of the statement you have only to toss a bright pebble or bit of tin into a pool containing trout; if warily done every fish in the pool will rise to meet the descending object. Again and again I have "compelled" trout to bite by simply drawing my bait through the water so rapidly that they have struck at it before they recognized its character. Certainly no worm or other natural food ever propelled itself, or was carried by the current at such a pace. Why did the trout strike? Did they think the object some strange food? Was it mere curiosity? I am inclined to the latter opinion. The mental processes of the fish, speaking humanly of course, were something as follows. "See that rapidly fleeing object. It is trying to escape. It must be that

it fears us, therefore something we feed upon. I will catch it." All of which is beside the question, for the fish strikes instinctively without any mental activity whatever. Spinners came into existence to meet a well defined need: to wit, to stir trout to activity when "slumberous," "finicky," "off their feed," or whatever you please.

"But will a true sportsman use spinners for trout?" Here is a question that is being asked over and over again by anglers who above all things desire to be sportsmen. I cannot see why with proper tackle spinning may not be as truly sportsmanlike as fly-fishing even. That one method of fishing is in itself more sportsmanlike than another is a fallacy. Sportsmanship is something finer than tackle, though there is such a thing as "proper" tackle. Sportsmanship is the spirit of fair play raised to the *n*th power, a willingness to give and take and keep sweet the while. The reason some anglers frown upon the spinner for trout is because they do not realize the possibility of the little whirler when used with proper tackle. As much skill is required to handle a small spoon with skill and finesse as is employed by the average fly-fisherman—a statement which many will doubt, but a fact possible

of demonstration nevertheless. The trouble with many anglers is that they condemn a method before they try it—which, by the way, is true of other than mere fishermen. Our preconceived notion of a "spoon" is a great bit of metal, weighted with a chunk of lead and fastened to the end of a hand-line; but the "spoon" used by the finished trout spinner is as light and airy as is the fuzzy-wuzzy lures effected by the fly artist. Before you pass judgment, investigate.

Of course one would not think of using a spinner on a little, brushy brooklet where the seldom pools are but caricatures of broad-reaching "swims"; nor yet would one attempt to spin upon the white waters of a mountain torrent. But the wide and deep river, or the small stream with deep, silent pools—these are a different proposition. I have never used spinners to any great extent in the rapids, though trout will rise to them there, probably because in deep water I have found the little lures more attractive to large fish, and it is as a lure for large fish that spinners are here recommended. There are pools on the average trout stream sheltering such fish as the angler dreams about, fish waiting for the man with a spinner, the man who knows how to handle the rod and efface himself.

As was intimated in the last paragraph our mental concept of a spinner is a great garish spoon such as the muskellunge fisherman employs; but the fact of the matter is, the trout spinner is light enough and beautiful enough to find place in the dry-fly fisherman's box of artistic lures. The first real spinner that ever fell into my hands was sent me by a certain New Mexico dentist, who, having discovered the possibilities of the lure in the Colorado River, made what he wanted for himself. At that time such small spinners were not to be found upon the market; now you can get them anywhere, of any material and with or without flies attached. I have some pearl spoons, some silver, some nickel, and some hand-made of aluminum. In some the width of the spinning blade is only ¼ of an inch, others 5/16 and ⅜, and from that up to "full-grown" spoons. In my experience the spoon should be small, not over ⅜ of an inch wide and, say, ⅝ long; though my preference is for one made upon smaller lines than those just given. Some are made with two spoons, or blades; though I have not found them more attractive than the single type. To-day, flies of various colors can be secured, and one can even use the regular eyed fly if he so chooses.

The rod differs not at all from the regular fly-rod; indeed it should be the rod you use in dry-fly fishing for heavy trout. Of course, the rod must have some backbone; but upon the other hand it should not be a stiff, actionless "pole." Just the regular fly-rod, of six or seven ounces, nine and a half feet long, will be found perfectly satisfactory. The line best adapted to the work is the silk casting line affected by the bait enthusiast; though one could use the enameled silk; however, that is a floating line, and in spinning one may desire to let the little lure down into the water where the big ones foregather. I have found the multiplying reel very convenient in playing the fish, though the off-set handle is a bother as it is in fly-fishing. There is a multiplying reel upon the market without the balance handle; this is ideal for all fly-fishing. It is made of aluminum and is strong. The automatic offers points of excellence not to be passed carelessly by. Whatever you select, see that you get the best, for the best is none too good.

If you are a surface fly-fisher proceed to forget all you know about trout fishing save the habits of that shy cold water denizen; that knowledge will always stand you in good stead no matter what the tackle in your hand. In

casting you must bear in mind the direction of the wind and direction of current, both of which are important, the first because it is difficult to cast against the wind, the second because the spinner works better against the current. Do not move the lure through the water as though you were afraid that the fish would bite; give them plenty of time. More fish are lost because we move our lures too rapidly than are gained by the method. (This statement applies to all varieties of fishing.) When you cast, give the spinner time to sink well down if the water be deep, then draw in by "fits and starts." I have moved a trout to attack by what I call "hectoring": that is, drawing the spinner rapidly for a few feet, then stopping suddenly, drawing again, and stopping. Nine times out of ten a fish will strike in spite of himself, seemingly over-running the spinner without desiring to do so. More trout are caught when spinning against the current than when moving the lure with it. *N. B.*: The lure does not move so rapidly against the current as with it, though the blades revolve at a great rate. When a fish is known to lurk behind a rock or snag, the lure should be cast beyond and retrieved slowly. Casting to the edge of an overhanging bank and allowing

the lure to sink before beginning the homeward motion will often result in a strike. An intimate knowledge of the stream and the habits of trout is a prime requisite.

As to whether one is to fish the surface or fish the depths will depend upon where the fish are feeding and somewhat upon the character of the water fished. There are times when the only method is to let the lure sink down, down, until it all but drags the bottom; that is when trout are not rising to the surface at all. Then there are times when the surface should be fished: when trout are disporting themselves as they often do at evening or early morning. Late in the season, when the fish are found in deep, silent pools, go down where they live. If wading, cast below the pool, let the lure sink, reel slowly up through the school of fish. That such fishing should be done "with the current" goes without saying. The reason some men say "spin deep" is because the streams fished by them are of the class where trout feed upon the bottom largely; on the other hand, those who say "spin the surface" give the advice because their streams are surface feeding streams. Learn to suit your spinning to the needs of the particular stream fished. Never forget the point made often in

this work—trout of two contiguous streams may differ in feeding habits.

The way of a trout with a spinner is as the way of a man with a maid, always different. Some trout sound the depths, once they feel the prick of the hook, fighting out the battle well below the surface if allowed to do so; others come to the surface and finish the struggle there. Wherever the battle is fought, it usually ends in the angler's favor, for when spinning, the fish are well hooked as a rule. There is no "tail dancing," for speckled trout do not fight after that fashion; but there will be deep tackle-testing surges, long rushes and hook-loosening borings; there will be in-rushes, giving line more rapidly than even the speedy automatic can care for it; there will be long sulks when the fish will resist your every effort to dislodge it; in fact, the way of a brook trout with a spinner is the way of the true salmon with a fly. Spinning for trout is only in its infancy and we may look for many developments in the days to come.

A few seasons ago I was fishing a well-known Middle West trout stream, but the fish were off their feed and would not look at my flies, though I flatter myself that I have a little skill with the feathers. Then I bent on a small spinner and

attached a red bucktail fly. A lusty trout followed my lure in upon the first cast, but always about six inches behind. Then I resorted to the tactics which I have described elsewhere in this chapter, retrieving the spoon in by a number of successive short, sharp jerks. The wary trout "over-ran," or came to the conclusion that the strange fly with whirling wings that worked under water was worth swallowing, for he took the little hook well into his mouth and was landed after an interesting battle.

CHAPTER X

TROUT IN THE NIGHT-TIME

THERE is something about the unusual that appeals to the normal man. Some one has said that the thing we cannot understand we worship, a statement which must be taken in a Pickwickian sense; but be that as it may, the angler's bump of curiosity is well developed: he is always on the lookout for a new method of angling, a new experience, or an odd bit of tackle. The lure of night fishing is the lure of the mysterious. There is something about a trout-stream after the sun has set and the dark shadows have crept stealthily in from the East, that tickles our imagination and gratifies our love of the unusual. The world becomes unbelievably large, even a small stream reaching away and away into infinity. Perhaps the reader will think this extravagant language, but let him experiment with even an inconsequential trout stream and he will discover some things undreamt of in a fisherman's philosophy. As will hereinafter appear, a night fisherman must possess a love of poesy, a

belief in ghosts, and patience raised to the *n*th power.

Perhaps the foregoing paragraph has stirred the "practical" fisherman to wrath and he is insistently asking about now, "And is that all you have to say in favor of night fishing?" Indeed not, my dear sir, though I have long put poesy first. Night fishing appeals to me also because under certain conditions it is the most successful method. In some much-fished streams such as exist near centers of population, through much persecution the fish have gradually acquired the habit of feeding at night; and he who would take the large trout must conform his habits to meet the changed conditions. I could mention a number of Middle West streams falling under this head. Again, in midsummer, when the water is low, the sun unremitting in heat, and the trout unduly wary, you will find them feeding up to midnight often and sometimes the whole night through. No doubt every lover of speckled trout who reads this chapter can remember days and days when he has followed some stream beneath a blazing sun, having for his reward copious perspiration and a few fingerling fish. The solution of that problem would have been night-fishing. So successful is the method that

it is frowned upon by some as unsportsmanlike, and laws may be passed making it a crime to cast fly or bait after sunset; but with that phase of the question we are not dealing here, our purpose being to gather "trout lore." It is well for the trout-fisherman always to remember that his favorite fish is an inveterate and omnivorous feeder save at spawning time; if ill luck attends the fisherman's efforts to entice the speckled rascals from their hiding places for any great length of time he may know that he is either not offering them what they desire, or he is not offering it when desired.

For fear that I have painted the joys of night fishing in too bright colors I must show the reverse side of the shield.

Probably the most disagreeable feature attending the sport, especially on our smaller streams, is the ubiquitous mosquito. He is bad enough in midday, conscience knows, but when night has spread her sable mantle he is in his glory. The mosquito loves darkness because his deeds are evil. Again and again I have been driven from streams where I thought to solve some ichthyic problem by the blood-thirsty pests. The darkness itself is a serious drawback, for the flies, or even baited hooks, develop a devilish pro-

pensity to snag—on logs in the stream and trees above. A single fly can cut up more didos after nightfall than is possible for a cast of three in daylight. Ordinarily dew rises coincident with the setting of the sun, and grass, brush and trees are loaded with an excess of moisture. Wear hip boots and a short raincoat unless you are willing to be drenched. Then, too, it is exceedingly difficult to play a large fish when unable to see the water's surface, usually obscured by mist, and the advantages are all on the fish's side. But then, we fish for fun and the greater the chances the greater the fun, so what will you? Men have tried night fishing with me and deserted within an hour, convinced that the game was not worth the price. Night fishing is not for all, but those who can master the art will succeed in taking big fish where and when others fail.

There is certain stream-knowledge which the night fisher must possess e'er he venture upon an expedition. It would be the last letter in folly for a man to attempt to fish a stream for the first time after nightfall: it is a foregone conclusion that he would return with broken tackle and frayed temper. Never attempt to night-fish a stream with which you are not acquainted.

NIGHT FISHING

"I resort to night fishing when I have caught a glimpse of a square-tailed monster which refused to show any interest in my daylight lures."—*Page 72*

FISHING A POOL

"Such a pool is too deep to wade; but if the stream be not too large, the pool may be fished from bars which the current will have constructed at the head."—*Page 82*

Intimate stream knowledge is an absolute prerequisite. By stream-knowledge I mean a mental picture of every current, eddy, snag, overhanging bank, out-leaning brush and menacing branch. I am speaking of small streams, of course. You can so learn a stream only after many a daylight expedition. I have found it a good plan to study out the cast in midday—where I will stand, where the rod shall swing, the fly strike, and where I will play the fish if hooked. Why, I often practise the whole thing over and over again before I attempt the venture. Of course that is because I resort to night fishing when I catch a glimpse of some square-tailed monster that refuses to show any interest in daylight lures.

Some years ago I was fishing a certain much visited stream and one day stumbled upon a pool which no one had ever fished for the simple reason that it was impossible to get at it, leaning trees and brush, as well as many snags, making it out of the question to touch the water with any sort of lure whatever. Indeed, it was when disentangling a snarled leader that I had tried to force down through the "interlacing protectorates" that I discovered the deep pool off under the roots of a large tamarack tree. I returned

to camp, got an ax and spent half a day clearing away the brush and roots, doing it so carefully that a chance fisherman would not discover the improvements. I figured it all out, where I would stand, etc.; then I waited three days before I visited the pool again. Several times I caught a glimpse of a fish so large that my heart nearly choked me; but he would not respond to my offerings, and I resorted to night tricks. I am not going to tell you of the result, only this —I, with lamp, went down at eleven o'clock at night and with a white millar fly took three trout which weighed over five pounds.

A subject often debated among night fishers is whether or not it is best to select a night when the moon shines brightly, some contending that trout rise more freely in "the dark o' the moon," while about as many maintain that if the night be as "light as day" the fish are more often "on their feed." I think the true answer would be the noncommittal. "That depends." As I have again and again pointed out, one must not lay down hard and fast rules as to what trout will do under any given circumstances; we can only generalize. There are times, or at least streams, where trout do rise on dark, moonless nights; there also are streams from which I have taken

fish when the "full August moon" smiled down. Personally I should not let the moon's phase deter or urge me to night fishing, as I do not believe that the moon has much to do with a fish's appetite, though a full-moon is of great aid to the angler. Some people insist that fish can see better when the moon shines, a statement which I receive with caution, for the darker the night the more large fish one hears leaping in the pools of a small stream, presumably feeding. The night activities of trout are as mysterious as the movements of certain city gangs.

I may not close this chapter without a word regarding tackle, not that special tackle is required, but certain qualities are demanded. The rod should be the regular fly-rod, somewhat stiffer perhaps, possessed of plenty of action but with sufficient backbone to hold even a heavy fish. The length of the rod will vary with the water to be fished, not over eight and a half feet for small creeks, and up to whatever you desire for boat fishing. All that I have said in these chapters regarding quality should be emphasized here, for in no fishing will a man be compelled to demand so much of a rod. As you love your light rod do not put it to the service. A good steel rod is a splendid tool, for should you get

into a mix-up with the brush you need not fear the outcome.

The line must be strong and somewhat heavy, possessed of strength enough to break any hook or leader you ever use. It is always wise to employ a stronger line than hook; then if anything parts it will be hook or leader and you will not lose a goodly portion of your line. Err, if err you must, on the side of safety and select a line that impresses you as cumbersome even, but secure strength. The leader should be short, never over three feet long; some good fishermen dispense with it altogether when fishing small, brushy streams, which does not impress me as being wholly bad, though I, on such waters, shorten it to a single foot. Of course in open water one may gratify his longing for any length of leader, for there is nothing to prevent his casting when and how he chooses, but on small streams the leader is not an unmixed blessing.

One fly will prove ample; indeed, a single hook will get you into more trouble after nightfall than will a cast of three when the sun is shining. Many good night fishermen advocate large flies for evening fishing, arguing that the fish can more easily locate them. Again much depends upon local conditions. If the fish are feeding

on small insects, mosquitoes say, then use the small flies and do not run after bright or flamboyant patterns. When trout are feeding upon white millars, or insects of that order, not speaking as a scientist, use your large light-colored flies; under such conditions I have found the old reliable silver doctor a winner, a fly-fisher's fly and one hard to beat anywhere or time. I am firmly convinced that the small, inconspicuous fly is the one to use on most streams in the evening; a conclusion I have reached only after years of study, correspondence and observation. I am not going to publish a list here, but simply say cling to the browns and grays as a rule.

As more and more night fishing is being resorted to in over-fished waters, anglers are turning their attention to many artificial lures, a subject which I have not investigated to any great extent though I have experimented with several well-known lures. On dark nights I have found the luminous lures such as Moonlight and Coaxer Fly very good indeed, better the darker the night. Silver, pearl, and luminous spoons are good in broad, deep waters, though spoon-casting is out of place in a small stream. I am of the impression that any lure small enough to be handled successfully by a fly-rod would serve the purpose

of the night fisher. Fishing for trout with artificial lures is in its infancy and may never grow up.

Night fishing is a dark subject, so allow a word upon illumination. In making one's way to and from the stream, or in untangling a bad snarl, there is nothing quite so satisfactory as a dependable light. Some carry an oil lantern; but for reasons which it is unnecessary to enumerate such a light is not wholly satisfactory. An electric flash is very good, convenient and satisfactory; but when a strong steady light is needed for any length of time it is not just what we desire. After trying many makes of lanterns and flashes, I have turned to the acetylene lamp as being the most cleanly and satisfactory. It should be provided with a "shut off," as light is not desirable until the fish is hooked or trouble arrives. As to the light of a lantern attracting a fish—well, I have yet to be convinced.

I may not well conclude this chapter without adding a word upon the question of live bait for night fishing. All ordinary baits used, from worms up through the long list to minnows, will prove attractive; though there is little to recommend live bait in this connection unless it be fish, it does get fish. Probably the best live bait is

small shiner minnows, two or three inches long, those the seldom trouts of deep pools and lake bottoms find well-nigh irresistible. A sinker should be used and the bait forced down to the nether home of those fish that forget they should be surface feeders. Nothing attractive about the method.

CHAPTER XI

THE TROUT OF THE DEAD-WATER

THE trout of the dead-water is a distinct fish. As he has deepened in color and aldermanic proportions with the passing of the years, so too he has increased in shyness and resourcefulness. Not every angler can tempt him to rise, nor hook him when he has risen. Furthermore, even when hooked, the dead-water fish is not netted, as many a sad and wise fisherman can testify. The dead-water trout is quite apt to be a solitary fish, though when the pool is large and deep several fish may inhabit the same "swim." Be it said, however, if the angler hopes to take more than one large fish from the same pool, he must move with circumspection and great slyness; indeed, let him not mourn overmuch if he succeed in taking only one of the speckled grandfathers. Though finical, slow to rise, and suspicious, the aged *fontinalis* is in nowise decrepit, a victim of senile decay; rather, once hooked, he manifests a strength and resourcefulness which bodes ill

to tackle, and disproves a well-known saying regarding age being fitted for counsel and youth for war. Let the angler remember what the late President Cleveland said regarding the escape of big fish; thus fortified, he will not feel so bad when the square-tailed trout of the dead-water wig-wags him "good-by."

There are two classes of pools, depending upon the character of the streams. Rapid streams, with many falls and rock-strewn shoots, will offer deep, broad, open pools at the foot of rapids, sometimes at their head, as well as deep "swims" where the stream bends sharply. Such pools are open and easily fished notwithstanding their lack of current—of which more later. The second class of pools are of the sort that try the angler's soul, though they offer great possibilities. I refer to the currentless stretches of deep water sometimes found on the smaller streams, guarded by an entanglement of almost impenetrable brush and overhung by leaning trees. Naturally the average fisherman, ninety-nine out of every hundred, passes this class of pools as being too difficult of access, thereby leaving a soul-rending or pleasurable experience, as the case may be, for his more patient and venturesome brother of the angle. The method of fishing the two classes

of pools will vary, naturally; so for the sake of clearness we will study them separately.

As a rule the open pool of the size to which I refer is found upon the larger and more rapid streams, those with plenty of water and current. Such a pool is too deep to wade; but if the stream be not too large, the pool may be fished from shifting bars which the current will have constructed at the head, or with a little forethought openings will be discovered along the bank. Unless the stream be wadable it is never the part of wisdom to approach the water's edge; rather cast from well back. Here complete mastery of the art of fly-fishing stands the angler in good stead, and he who can lay the longest line with accuracy and skill will take the most fish. Intimate knowledge of the pool is of utmost importance, so that the water may be covered almost from memory. Dry fly, wet fly and underwater fly, all may be resorted to upon occasion. Be it said, however, that ordinarily it will be the fly which touches the water with the least commotion that will be most quickly snapped up by waiting fish. Never, as you hope for a rise, let the line sag so as to strike the water first, or allow the flies to touch the surface with a "plop."

All dead-water pools should be fished from both below and above: in some the fish will be found at the lower end, while in others they will lurk at the mouth. I need not add if there be an entanglement of snags or outreaching roots the water is more certain to contain large fish and your problem becomes more complicated.

In striking a rising fish the angler need be in no haste, for the dead-water fish is not overly fast, though it is better I think to err upon the side of haste than to give your fish time to discover the true nature of the insects to whose invitation he has risen. The fish that has been cheated of the flies by your haste, will come again; but let him once mouth the feathers and it is dollars to doughnuts that he will retire to the deepest shades to meditate upon his own foolishness.

All that has been said regarding slyness and skill in manipulation of flies when fishing the open pool should be repeated here, as should also the bit of advice regarding fishing both the upper and lower pool. However, as now we are speaking of a tree and brush environed pool, ability to "lay a long line" is not so valuable an asset. Sometimes casting is out of the question. Then you must resort to what is called the "snap-

cast," which, by the way, is not a cast at all. Holding the end fly between thumb and forefinger of the left hand, the rod is bent into a bow and the flies shot, or "snapped," in under the brush and trees. It is difficult to place the flies properly, but it can be done. Of course if there is any current at all, the lures may be floated down from the upper end, but I have found in fishing such pools that it is much better to cast from below, *over the fish.* In fishing brushy pools you must learn to handle the line with your left hand, if you cast with your right, grasping it between the reel and first guide, keeping the rod parallel with the water; then, if a fish rise to the flies unexpectedly near your feet you are in a position to strike, which would not be the case were the rod held in the ordinary position. Learn to strike *toward* your body and not upward as is usual, then you will not hang your flies in the brush. Any one will concede that the Scarlet Ibis is a handsome fly, but I have yet to find the angler who will admire even a Scarlet Ibis when it adorns an alder upon the far side of a stream. Such fishing is by no means easy; therefore it is passed by, by the average angler, and for that very reason the man possessed of

patience plus will shall return at nightfall with a few fish that will render him the most envied of all the envied.

Naturally a large fish in such an environment will put up a tremendous fight: the odds are all in his favor. The prime need of the angler here, as in casting, is patience. As you value your tackle, as you hope to land the trout, do not hurry. Again, *take plenty of time.* There is such a vast difference between the trout of the average brooklet and the great, lusty dead-water fish that the angler is tempted to exert too much strength, to cut the battle short. To attempt either is to tear the hook away or, if it be well fastened, to break the leader. Give the fish time, granting that you keep him away from snags, and he will play himself. A good landing net is a prime necessity, for without it you may not hope to land your capture. I use a certain net with a folding handle, one that can be extended with a single motion of the left hand, and is absolutely rigid and dependable. Never attempt to use the net unless the fish is tired out. More than once I have lost the record fish of the day because I could not wait until it was exhausted.

Of all sad words of fishing-men,
The saddest is,—
A hasty fool I've surely been.

He who would successfully fish the deadwater should select his tackle with the large trout in mind; the small fish that he takes he will accept as a matter-of-course, a mere incident of the day's fishing. For the brushy pool the rod should be somewhat short, say eight and a half feet, and rather stiff. It is a good idea to have double the number of guides usually placed upon a rod; then the outreaching brush will be foiled in its attempts to entangle your line. For the broad, open pool, the rod should be somewhat longer and heavier, even up to ten feet and with a weight of six ounces. The longer and heavier rod will render more casting power, and sometimes it is very important to lay a long line; furthermore, such a rod will give you greater fighting strength, something you will appreciate when the expected unexpected happens. The reel should be a quadruple multiplier, an automatic if you know how to handle one. The line should be the best procurable, double tapered if you can afford the luxury. If you select a rod that weighs in the neighborhood of six ounces, I would say employ a size E line, perhaps F, all

PLAYING THE FISH

"Naturally a large fish in such an environment will put up a tremendous fight."—*Page 85*

PLAYING THE WHITE-WATER FISH

"To attempt to net a heavy fish in rough rapids is suicidal."—*Page 93*

depending upon the character of the rod. The size of the line has nothing to do with the size of the fish; even the smallest enameled line will hold any trout that ever swam; rather the line should be selected with an eye to ease in casting. All else being equal, the larger the line, the easier it will be to lay the flies. In the matter of leader I differ with most authorities, seldom using over a four-foot gut, where those who know advise six.

The flies should be selected with circumspection, though I am inclined to believe that more depends upon the handler than upon the size of hooks. Two flies should be employed, the end fly of a more striking color, so that it will stand out in the semi-gloom of a well-shaded pool. Do not think that a large-sized hook should be selected because you are fishing for large fish; nine times out of ten, the smaller the hook, the more attractive the lure. Let size eight be your largest hook, but have a supply of smaller so that should No. 8 prove unavailing you can fall back upon your reserves. The usual patterns should be employed, and "light flies for dark days: dark flies for bright days" is the old rule. On a Wisconsin stream much fished by me I have found black flies; such as black gnat, black hackle and

black sally, the most taking under all conditions, which is unusual. It is a good idea to have a few abbeys, coachmen, royal coachmen and professors.[1]

I cannot close this chapter without some mention of bait, though a lengthy discussion is impossible. There are times, after heavy rains when the water is dark and muddy, or when for some reason trout will not look at a fly; then to resort to worms or grasshoppers, as the case may be, is to turn defeat into victory. If fishing with worms after a heavy rain, a single shot should be attached to the leader just above the hook. Such fishing is a waiting game, one that will not appeal to the average fly-fisherman. I would not vary the tackle from that advised above.

[1] I had a rather unusual experience one year. While on my vacation I was blessed with two weeks of rain, and as a result the streams were bankful of muddy, turgid water. Strange to say the trout were rising to black flies, flies so dark that I could not distinguish them upon the surface of the water. I never had better sport, or caught such large fish. So again an age-old theory was exploded.

CHAPTER XII

THE TROUT OF THE FOAM

WHEN I outlined this work I made no provision for a chapter under such a title as the above, but as I worked along chapter by chapter, and especially when writing the one just closed, I was impressed with the importance of the subject. Here, in as few words as possible, I wish to incorporate the accumulated knowledge of the last twenty years, as well as the result of much reading. Naturally, as no provision was made for this chapter in the genesis of the work, I shall repeat myself to some extent; yet there is need for the discussion, for I wish to cover the subject in such a way as will best help my readers—and obviate answering many letters. The trout of the foam are as distinct and peculiar as are the trout of the dead-water. If the latter are heavier than the former it is their only advantage, as the former are aided by the weight of down-rushing water. Circumspect and possessed of good tackle is the angler who

can successfully play and net a two-pound fish, or even a one-pounder, in a heavy rapid.

As a rule I prefer to fish the dead-water and inaccessible pools, not only because of the large trout taken but also because of the greater skill and patience required; nevertheless, I often turn to the white water for pan fish, and heart-palpitating excitement. There is a certain joy in fearing that your tackle will break—if it doesn't.

I once located what I thought was a large speckled trout in a dead-water at the head of a long tumultuous rapid. Several times I caught fleeting glimpses of his magnificent proportions when he rose to examine my offered flies, but always he returned to the depths after a single glance. Day after day I visited the dead-water but never did I even prick him with a hook. He was old and wise and shy. Then one evening, just as dusk was gathering, I slowly climbed the rapids, my mind fixed upon the pool at their head. Just where the water poured out of the pool there was a shoot of some twenty feet with a fall of four or five. Thinking that perhaps a trout might have taken up his abode just outside the down-rushing flood, as often is their habit, I sent my flies, two black hackles, out to the likely spot. Instantly a great trout, a rain-

bow, went into the air, curved over the flies and disappeared. Would he come again? I cast with little hope, but instantly the fish leaped and I struck. Now I am not going to tell of the battle: that is superfluous and impossible. Anyway, for a long twenty minutes I played the trout, in the rapids and out of them. At last, becoming impatient and under-estimating the strength of the fish, I attempted to use the net. As the net neared his shining body there was a leap, a great flop, and an empty net with an entangled fly. It was all my fault, but that did not salve my mind in the slightest. It was my big trout of the upper pool. Not a speckled trout, as I had thought. Just why he came down out of the pool to bathe in the rushing water is a question. I hardly think a speckled trout of the same size would have made the transfer. Now had I had that fish in the upper pool there is no question in my mind but that I would have succeeded in landing him, but the current was too faithful an ally. Some day I am going back to that same pool and I hope I may be permitted again to try conclusions with that rainbow.

Your experienced angler soon learns where to look for trout when they are lying out in the rapids; indeed, he seems to *feel* the presence of

a fish. I do not know that I made myself clear in the incident just narrated as to where that rainbow lay. In a stream with as great a volume of water as that possessed, trout would not lie in the main current, but just at the side and well toward the head of the shoot. To cast a fly directly in the current would be the height of folly, not only because the trout would not see it but also because it would instantly be swept back to the angler. The fly should be cast into the little swirl or back-set which margins the current, across the current, if the stream be not too large. The fly will hesitate long enough to give the fish its opportunity. Strike instantly. In a swift current you cannot strike too quickly; indeed, the trout will often hook himself without effort on your part. Other spots beloved of the swift-water habitué are the little pools below and above rocks. Always where you see a gray old boulder showing its water-varnished head above the flood, you will find a miniature pool gouged out by the ceaseless action of the current; usually below, but sometimes above. Cast your flies a little above the exact spot you wish to fish, and retrieve them with a quartering motion over the water.

Always fish rapids from below, not simply be-

cause trout lie with their heads upstream—there is something in that—but because it is much easier to hook fish when casting over them. I have experimented at length and have come to the conclusion that rapids always should be fished from below. When the water boils along the bank, if there be a cranny or crevice amid the rock, or a hole in the bank, look for a trout. Even a board or stick of driftwood caught on a rock is pretty sure to shelter a small fish. In fishing a rapid fish skilfully and carefully. Do not allow even a small and unprepossessing appearing bit of water to pass unnoticed. Always drop your flies in every opening. Again and again I have taken good fish where I least expected to do so. It is the patient, painstaking angler who fills his basket.

It is impossible to offer much advice upon the playing of fish in the rapids, the angler being almost wholly at the mercy of the warring currents. If the rapid be fierce and possessed of a volume of water, there is but one way to play a heavy fish—coax him down through the rocks to the quiet pool below and there vanquish him. To attempt to net a heavy fish in rough rapids is suicidal. Witness my disaster as related at the beginning of this chapter. When the cur-

rent adds its strength to that of the fish, there is but one thing for the rodster to do—the behest of the current. To attempt to swing a pound trout free of the water, even supposing you are using a rod fitted to the work, is very foolish: the chances are good to lose a leader or at least the fly. Take time and work the fish into some little pool or back-water from which you can lift him with the net. Take ample time. Work slowly. Do not get excited. (There is no danger of that, of course!)

I presume we may not understand clearly just why trout love to lie in the rapids. In hot weather, when the streams are low, they undoubtedly seek such localities because the water is more thoroughly aerated. When we find them lying at the foot or side of foaming rapids it is probably because they find the location good for food hunting, the current bringing down with it insects, worms, bugs and all manner of fish delicacies. Upon the other hand, during bright, warm days in early spring we sometimes find trout lying out in the shallow rapids, hardly deep enough or possessed of water enough to be called rapids, rather ripples. What are they doing? "Sunning themselves," the older anglers tell us, and for want of a better reason we may as well

let that pass. When the fish seek out the shallows to bask and dream, the angler may as well unjoint his rod; at least take himself to other portions of the brook. I have never had very good luck when the fish manifested a desire to contemplate the sky, and never have I taken a good fish from the clear shallows with flies.

In closing this chapter, a few words upon the always interesting subject of tackle may not be out of place. As to the rod, all will depend upon what you fish for. If your ambition is to land as many fish as possible, then secure a cane pole, à la small boy, but if you fish for sport and are willing to let the heavy fish go with the water, down to the open pool or liberty, then employ the regulation rod, the one that fits you and you can handle most skilfully. I ordinarily employ a rather heavy rod, of five or six ounces, because a light rod will often come to grief in the stress and strain of white water. Another reason for using a heavy rod is that given in the preceding chapter—ability to make long casts and increased control of hooked fish. However, truth compels me to confess that I have courted thrills by going up against white-water fish with a little dandy, fairy rod of three and a half ounces; never have I broken the rod but I have secured

thrills of several sorts and varying magnitude. My advice to the average angler is simply, don't. The line should be somewhat heavy, size E or F. Leader of ordinary length. Any standard pattern of flies, adapted to the stream and season, will prove satisfactory. They may run somewhat large in the larger streams, of a dark color if white water predominates. In the smaller creeks employ the smaller flies, even the midgets; but more of this matter in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

TROUT OF THE LITTLE BROOKS

NOT every angler knows the fascination of little streams, the whimsical meandering brooklets, but those who do never gaze with longing eyes in the direction of the mighty rivers, e'en though the latter hath power to bestow fish large beyond the imagining of the streamlet. It is not the fish one catches, nor yet the large fish which so often escapes, that makes the little streams so attractive, but what they themselves are. I wonder if I have made myself clear. The little rivers are companionable, slipping into our fondest musings with an understanding denied all human friendships. For our gay moments there are chuckling rapids, scintillating in the bright sunlight, and for our graver hours there are miniature pools, calm, serene, mirroring the fleecy clouds that float overhead, even as they reflect our inmost thought. There is a fidelity about the little creeks; you can depend upon them. They have a genius for intimacy un-

approached by larger waters. You soon learn all about them, every pool, eddy, and glancing rapid is as familiar to you as the topography of your own home—a knowledge denied the fisher of great rivers. Forever commend me to the little brooks.

As intimate acquaintance is the secret of the little brook's attractiveness, so it is also the secret of successful angling. The first excursion to one of those streams is apt to prove fruitless, for the trout are wary beyond any other fish, and only he who learns where to cast without making his presence known may hope for success. I remember one little trout stream discovered by me some years ago, a stream flowing through a thickly settled farming community, cold and clear in spite of cows and sheep because fed from a number of springs. It was not a natural water, but some wandering ichthyic Johnny Appleseed dumped a can or two of fry into one of the springs in an early day and promptly forgot all about it. As a result, after he had been gathered to his fathers, disciples of Izaak Walton flocked to the little stream. It was "fished out" and again forgotten. Then one day I happened to cast a speculative fly upon its limpid surface and the glimpse I caught of a darting fish caused my

heart to jump. I courted that stream assiduously until I could cast from a distance and hit just where I should, so that the fly would be carried back under the bank or around the end of a snag, and I caught fish, lots of fish. It is still considered "fished out," but I can go back there any old day and catch a mess of glorious fish.

Now not every one can fish the little stream: a plethora of patience is a prime requisite. You must be content to make many a fruitless visit, but perseverance will surely reap its reward. "Use all the skill of which you are possessed and then some," is the cryptic advice I give would-be fishers who look to me for information. I know of no fishing where slyness on the part of the angler is so important, for the denizens of the brooklets seem to have the senses of sight and hearing developed to an unusual degree, though probably lack of water and circumscribed area of pools are responsible. I have learned my lesson thoroughly. I never let my shadow fall upon the water, neither do I tread the marge of the streams. My casting is all done from a distance of ten or fifteen feet. I study out a pool, if unacquainted, and fish on downstream, returning in an hour or so to catch the fish. If I hook a goodly fish and lose him, I mark the spot with a

stick, returning again and again until he finds his reluctant way into my basket. Perhaps it is the skill, patience, and perseverance required which has made of me a fisher of little streams.

I would not have you think for a moment that the trout of the meadow brooklets are all small; once you have learned how to angle you will be surprised by the size of the fish, even a two-pounder not being uncommon. Of course the large fish, unless unusually well hooked, is apt to escape. I think I am safe in saying that more large fish are lost by the angler of little streams than by his brother who fishes great waters. It must needs be so. There is little or no chance to "play" a fish, the angler often being compelled to lift his quarry from the water by main strength and awkwardness, a practise disastrous alike to tackle and creel. But a pound fish is a large one for a little river, more weighing under half a pound than over. I maintain, however, that it requires more skill successfully to play and land a half-pound fish on the average little stream than to take a two-pound trout from broad and unobstructed water. The fish are apt to be short, "chunky," and muscular; but painted with bright colors, as though the shallow water of their habitat had enabled the sun to impart

FISHING A LITTLE STREAM

"Now not every one can fish the little stream: a plethora of patience is a prime requisite."—*Page 99*

PLAYING A SPRING TROUT

"They are not so active on the hook as are the rapid-water fish, fighting well below the surface in a dogged, determined way."—*Page 118*

some of his glory. The trout of the brooklets are in a class by themselves.

The angler will soon learn where to look for fish, and cast instinctively, though perhaps a few remarks will not be out of place in this connection. Seldom will you find the trout of little brooks lying in the shallows; even if you do, it is dollars to doughnuts that they are only "sunning themselves" and will pay no attention to your most seductive flies or bait. It is to the hidden fish, the feeding fish, that you must look for a possible supper. Ofttimes a stream which discloses a shallow center will possess a foot or more of water close in under one bank or the other, dug by the persistent current. Always feeding trout seek out those "pools." Take a fish from such a place to-day and you will find another there to-morrow. Of course a log spells a pool. It is best to cast from above, for what current there is will suck the lure down under; then, "trout always lie with their heads upstream." A stump, with roots like the tentacles of a devil fish reaching down into the water, is sure to offer safe haven to one or more good fish; but cast with fear and much trembling, for in such an environment a hooked fish is by no means a creeled fish. Where a tree has fallen into the water, or

the swaying meadow-grass sweeps the surface, look for trout. Rather, look for trout anywhere, but expect them behind every obstruction. Sometimes there will be a deep pool at the bend of the stream; there expect two or more trout; but as you hope for success, fish the hole from well above. Gradually, as you become better acquainted with brooklets, you will know, without experimenting, where to look for trout and you will become a successful fisher of little streams.

On little streams the question of bait or flies is a pertinent one. Perhaps nine times out of ten on such streams the angler is under the necessity of resorting to bait, lack of water and intervening brush rendering fly casting out of the question. (As to the legitimacy of bait-fishing nothing need be said here.) The baby brooks were created for the bait-fisher. I need say nothing regarding the method of using bait, as the subject was discussed in a preceding chapter. As to whether the angler will use worms or grasshoppers, all will depend upon the character of the streams and the time of the year. I have always held that grasshoppers are poor lures in forest streams where the fish are not in the habit of feeding upon them, and, for the same reason,

in late midsummer earthworms are even less attractive upon a meadow brooklet. After a rain, when the water is opaque, the wise fisher discards his grasshopper can, even upon a meadow brooklet, for the flood water has washed many worms into the stream, and the trout are feeding upon them to the exclusion of all other food. This, then, is my conclusion, ordinarily the fisher of little streams will be compelled to use some form of bait, employing that which meets the whims of the trout.

The tackle used will depend upon the particular stream fished. Upon an open meadow brooklet, where 'hoppers can be cast without let or hindrance, or even artificial flies may be employed, the rod will be of the lightest, and all other tackle such as to preserve the unities. I know of no fishing that will so tickle a man's vanity as that of the baby brooks with baby tackle. On an open stream such as one finds once in a great while, a three-ounce rod is none too light; you may shade it half an ounce if you choose—heavy enough for the fishing and fish, and light enough to keep you on the qui vive, lest the seldom two-pounder surprise you in an unthinking moment. That is the poetry of angling. However, as pointed out in the last paragraph, such open

baby streams are the exception; indeed, I can count those with which I am acquainted upon the fingers of one hand. The ordinary brooklet flows through old pastures or ancient wood-lots, brush-grown and obstructed with numerous snags and drift, while overhanging trees, willows and alders, demand a short, stiff rod. An eight-foot bait-rod with reel seat below the hand is ideal, for with it you can reach out over a brush or snag and lift the fish skyward. That word skyward is used advisedly. Strike quick and sharp, throwing the trout upward with force. Personally, I use a light fly-rod for all fishing, though the one I employ on such a stream is only eight feet long and somewhat stiff. A friend of mine uses a bait casting rod six feet six inches long and will have nothing else. I desire action, and am willing to sacrifice a few fish in order to secure it. The "Will I or will I not?" of angling has always appealed to me.

The trout of the little brooks are different fish from those of broad and deep pools, or rushing tumultuous rivers; one may be a good fisherman upon the latter and fail utterly when courting the brooklets. I have said elsewhere that the fisher of little streams is born not made, a statement which possesses more than a modicum of

truth. Once get en rapport with the whimsical, meandering streams, acquainted with their bright-robed denizens, and, the word of my experience for it, you will not look with longing eyes in the direction of the Nipigon.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TROUT OF THE LAKES

As is well known, the preferred habitat of trout is a cold spring brook, yet the fish is also found in deep, broad rivers, and cold spring lakes. The reason the brook trout is seldom found in lakes is because of the higher temperature of the water and not because of the lack of current, as some suppose. Indeed the speckled trout does not seem so fond of rushing water as does his rival, the rainbow. The latter will live and thrive in water of a much higher temperature than the former, providing that it be well aerated. A moment ago I said that trout are seldom found in lakes, a statement which is not to be taken literally. In the great North Country, the water of the spring-fed lakes remains cold throughout the brief summer, and if at all adapted to trout, the beautiful fish may be taken therefrom during the whole season. Upon the other hand, I am acquainted with a number of lakes from which trout can be taken up to the middle of May; seldom later. Trout streams

head in those lakes, and apparently the fish make their way into them in the fall and winter, remaining the next spring until the warming water drives them out, or perhaps scarcity of proper food forces them into the little creeks. One lake much fished by me offers good trout fishing early in the season; later on, one can take small-mouth bass to his heart's content, seldom if ever seeing a trout. One peculiarity is that the trout always run large and the bass of medium size, two pounds being a large fish indeed. Three-pound trout are not uncommon. Do the bass feed upon the small trout, or is it only the big trout which find their way into the lake? I wish some one would answer.

It comes as a surprise to a great many people when they are informed that true speckled trout can be taken from the waters of Lake Superior. These are not lake trout, mind you, (*Christivomer namycush*) Mackinaw trout, but typical brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*. Says Kirkland B. Alexander in "The Log of the North Shore Club": "It is not always that one can fish the reefs of Lake Superior. I have waited and fretted and brooded in camp for a week for those white-caps to cease their snarling over yellow-fanged rocks where the biggest trout lie.

the speckled trout of the Big Water are an institution; but space is precious. There is one phase of lake trout fishing which will be taken up in a later chapter, "Bait Casting For Speckled Trout"—the confessions of an ichthyomaniac.

Now we turn our attention again to the smaller lakes, in which most of us will do our fishing if we are to fish for speckled trout in lakes at all. In my experience I have not found the fish fond of overly deep water, ten to fifteen feet being the limit. Sometimes one will discover a "boiling spring" in the bottom of a lake, usually near the shore, look for trout in the immediate neighborhood, especially along toward the fag end of the season. If a creek empties into the lake, fish its mouth; but use all your skill, for the fish will prove wary unless the water be dark or weather conditions "just right." Sometimes fish will be found amid the snags along shore, very much as small-mouth bass are found in Minnesota and Wisconsin. I am told by anglers who claim to know that there are times when speckled trout seek the very deepest portions of the lake and can be taken only with a "spoon hook"; though I have never had the experience.

The words of Mr. Alexander regarding fly-

fishing in Lake Superior can be studied with advantage by all lake fishermen, for the tastes and tactics of the fish of small lakes do not differ materially, save that large flamboyant flies are not apt to prove enticing. More and more I am coming to pin my faith upon small flies. For lake fishing I employ flies of regular size and pattern, for the most part. Nine times out of ten the fly that takes fish in the streams emptying into the lake, will take fish in the lake itself. I hold, you see, that there is a close connection between the lake fish and stream fish. A half dozen standard flies will be sufficient. Fly-fishing, save at the mouth of streams, will be well below par except in the early morning and at night. One will need a boatman if he is to fish the shore successfully: one that can manage the boat in silence and not become "rattled" when the unusual fish rises. Skirt the shore within easy casting distance, casting inward. Moor the boat in deep water at the mouth of streams and cast inward. Trout lie with their heads pointed toward the current, and you will be casting *over* the fish, an important matter, as every stream fisherman will realize. Then, too, four out of five fishermen wade out and cast into the lake; the other method is somewhat unusual and there-

fore more successful. There are times when to fish with a deeply sunken fly, as in bass fishing, is the most successful method.

We can dispose of the matter of tackle with a brief paragraph. One can suit his own fancy, using the tackle his skill permits. Because of the character of the fishing, few snags and obstructions, and no current, the past-master of the gentle art can employ light tackle; though the tyro is advised to employ rather heavy paraphernalia, at any rate the rod should weigh eight ounces and be possessed of considerable "backbone." If one has a trenchant for automatic reels and tackle of that ilk, the lake is the ideal place for its use; plenty of room, and need for heavy tackle. I do not know of a more exciting angling experience than playing a four-pound speckled trout in open water with an automatic reel. If an automatic is not used, I would advise a four-times multiplying reel, for it is often necessary to retrieve line quickly on an inrushing fish; this is impossible with a single action unless you pile the line at your feet, a dangerous procedure with a large fish that has room to fight. Having said all of the foregoing, let me add that I have gone up against large bodies of water with my three-and-a-half-ounce fly-rod

and light tackle, and have come off victorious; but, nevertheless, the practise is hereby *not* recommended: one runs too great chances.

I must not close this chapter without saying a word or two regarding bait-fishing. The early-season-lakes referred to a few moments ago, those from which trout are taken up to the middle of May, are bait lakes: the fish as a rule absolutely and resolutely refuse to be inveigled by flies—it is bait or bacon. Naturally it is deep fishing, and the bait, earthworms and minnows; the former will take the most fish and the latter large ones. Ordinarily, I do not use a sinker, though when a strong wind is blowing it is sometimes necessary. I do not use an orthodox bait-rod, preferring the seven-ounce fly-rod, with reel below the hand. I use a quadruple reel, of course; for, as pointed out before in this chapter, there are times when to be able quickly to gather in slack is of utmost importance. I would sum up my advice regarding bait-fishing in these words: Fish the bottom. It does not sound very attractive or sportsmanlike, I know, but it is the method that succeeds; and the unusual conditions and the size of the fish add zest to what otherwise would be unattractive.

Several summers ago I was fishing a north

Michigan trout stream, one that empties into a small lake, which in turn disembogues into a river that finds its tortuous way into Lake Superior. Needless to add, the little stream was a good trout stream. One day I followed down to the lake and, with the spirit of youth strong upon me, built a raft and floated out upon the quiet bosom of the little forest-environed body of water. I had no bait and the fish would not look at my flies—it was midday and the sun very bright—so I baited up with a trout eye, put on a sinker—a single split shot—and let my hook down to the bottom. What sport I had for half an hour! Those fish were feeding all right and in the time mentioned I had taken all that I had any right to, pound fish every one. Would they have taken worms with the same eagerness? Of course I do not know, but undoubtedly they would, for they were hungry and too lazy to seek food on the surface.

CHAPTER XV

THE TROUT OF THE SPRINGS

UNDOUBTEDLY every trout is a spring trout, for the scientific name means "dwelling in springs"; but I have a well defined notion of a spring trout as differing sufficiently in habits from his associates to deserve a chapter by himself. As one country boy put it to me some years ago: "Them trout that live in that spring up there are just like other trout, only more so." That is an apt description, all right, "like trout, only more so." By springs I do not mean the occasional spring one sometimes finds near the banks of trout streams, or welling from their beds, but the large springs, producing 'steen barrels of water per minute, the head of some creek mayhap, both broad and deep, the real home of trout. I am acquainted with several such springs, though I do not bruit their whereabouts abroad. (Would you? *Do* you?)

In passing, I will also touch upon the fish found in the immediate locality of the little springs which marge every worth-while speckled

trout water and are responsible for their low temperature. If the temperature of any water is to be kept down there must be springs from source to mouth, for no matter how cold water may be when it first finds its way into the brook, it will soon warm up when exposed to the atmosphere and summer sun.

A number of years ago I lived near a "fished out" stream, though I could manage to get half a dozen fish or so from its upper reaches if I fished faithfully for half a day; but, believe me, it was real fishing. One day I was driving back to town, following by preference what was called "the river road" because it followed the windings of the once-was trout brook, and I could dream of days that I never knew. Imagine my surprise when I drove slap into a farmer friend with a willow stringer just loaded down with such trout as I seldom took from the wilderness streams I visited during vacation. To my anxious and over-eager question as to where he secured them, he replied with an indefinite jerk of his head, "Oh, back there in the bresh." Of course I knew there was no use in pressing questions farther; had I been in his place I would have been no more communicative. That the fish had recently been taken from the water I

knew, for they were bright and fresh, all but flopping. I puzzled over the matter all the way home and dreamed about it during the night.

The next morning I was up betimes and afoot. To cut the story short, after nearly a day's search, I found the place from which the trout were taken, a spring-hole some twenty or thirty rods, perhaps more, back from the stream I had fished so much. The reason I had never suspected its presence was because it discharged into the river beneath the surface, and was surrounded with a thick growth of cedar and spruce in the midst of a quaking marsh. So black was the soil that the water itself appeared black, one could not see a fish until almost upon the surface. That hidden spring was literally alive with great lusty speckled trout. Each year the farmer who owned the spring emptied from two to four cans of fry into it, so he kept the numbers up. Of course he planted the fry according to law: "tributary to —— river"; but, judging from a screen at the outlet, the fish could not get down into the river if they so desired. No; I did not "squeal." Why should I? But I had some delightful experiences and several fine messes of "bog trout." If I am ever back in that section of the country I am going to look up

Mr. Blank's private trout spring. If he ever suspected me he never intimated as much.

If the reader wonders why I have taken time to narrate the foregoing, I will only remind him, "It is not all of fishing to fish."

I presume that the color of this class of fish is determined by the character of the soil and water; at any rate, all my fishing for spring trout has been done in springs found in dark, mucky soil. The trout have been stockily built and brilliantly colored, painted as they are, only when found in such environment. A short fish will weigh more than a third more than a fish of the same length taken from swift-running water. They are not so active on the hook as are the rapid-water fish, fighting well below the surface in a dogged, determined way. Of course they lead a sober, sedate sort of life, never battling with the current as do their brothers of the open; taking whatever food Fate offers, and being thankful. They support my theory that the character of a fish is largely determined by its environment.

As a rule I have found the trout dwelling apart from their fellows to be bait fish, though now and then they will rise to flies with avidity. Just why this should be so I cannot say. Just

where they get their food, if not from the air, is something of a puzzle. One naturally would expect them to be insect feeders, but such has not been my experience. Surely the trout of the streams find more worms and food of that sort than do the fish of which I write. Well, I am not dealing in theories; I am only reporting my own findings. I have found worms and even a bit of chub flesh very enticing. The eye of a fish is not to be passed lightly by.

As to tackle, that can be passed with but a word. I would use the regulation fly-rod, with reel below the hand, whether fishing with flies or worms: such a rod is always more satisfactory and sportsmanlike. The reel should be of the multiplying variety, preferably one without the offset balance handle. Standard enameled line, with small hooks. As to flies, when I have succeeded in inducing the trout to rise to them at all it has been to rather sober colors: Stone, Willow, the gray and brown Hackles, etc. Do not think that under the circumstances a large fly will prove attractive; the reverse is true. A small trolling-spoon, just a wee glint of silver, will sometimes stir the fellows that lie on the bottom. As to methods, the angler will need to employ all the skill and stealth of which he is

master. Usually the pool is surrounded with brush and trees, though sometimes it is open. If the first conditions mentioned maintain, you will be compelled to clear away a place from which to cast, if you use flies, sometimes even with bait; if the latter be true, then you will just have to forget all your dignity and worm your way up on your stomach. Cast from a distance and keep cool. Remember, unless much fished, a spring will produce some record trout.

I have never had an opportunity of experimenting with such fish after nightfall, but those who have inform me that the method is uniformly successful, the proper way being to take a boat or raft and float out upon the spring surface and "still fish." I am acquainted with but two springs large enough for the practise, and though I have never indulged in the sport I should think that a large basket would be the result. However, it has never appealed to me.

In these pages I have quite often mentioned the fact that trout are sure to be found in the springs that everywhere bubble up along the course of trout streams; especially is this true late in July and August, when the warming water drives the lovers of a low temperature to the only place they can find it. More than once I

have turned threatened defeat into a certain victory, simply because I know the location of a cold spring. Sometimes the spring will be located a few feet back from the stream, discharging underground; under those circumstances none but an observing angler will locate it; but if it is large enough to shelter fish the one who discovers it will have a few moments' royal sport. Always, just below those springs, in the main stream, trout will be found.

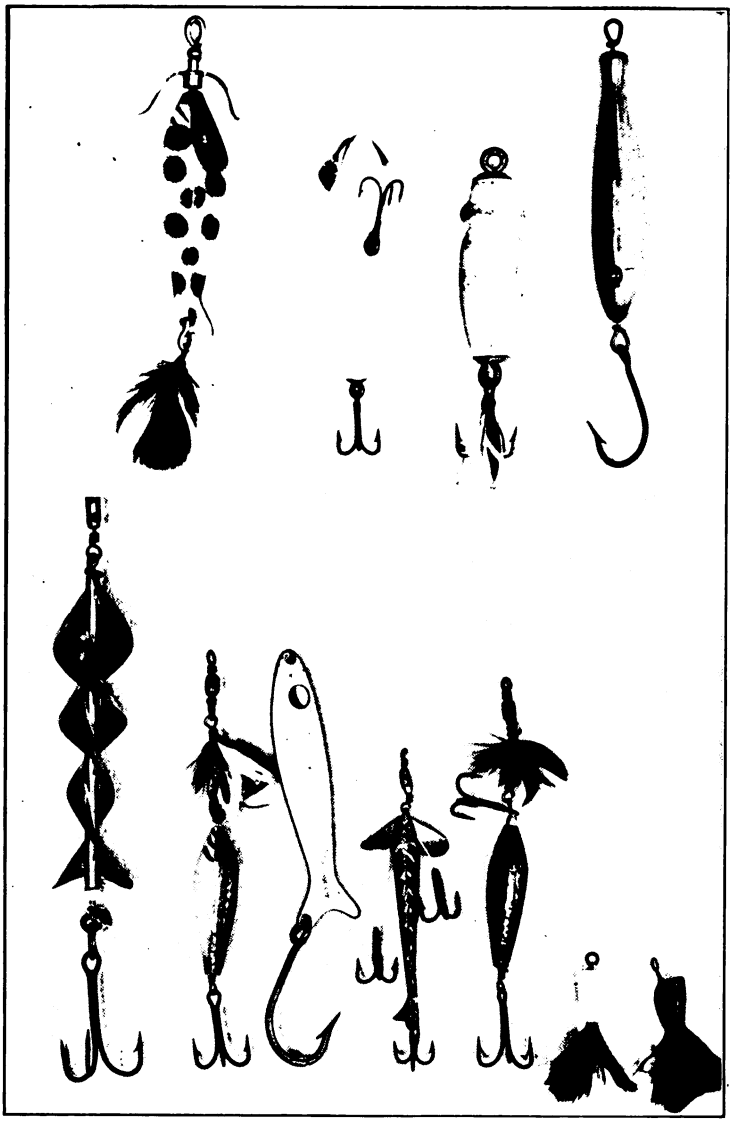
Only last summer I discovered where a little spring discharged from between two rocks. There was not over eight inches of water beneath the rock, and yet I never failed to hook or take a trout from that little pool. Really I should not call it a pool; rather, simply say "hole." I honestly think that I took twenty fish from the spot during the season. A rather peculiar thing was that with one exception they were all brook trout; that, too, in a stream where nine out of ten fish were rainbow. Where did those *fontinalis* come from? How did they discover that little rift in the rocks? Twice I got a fish going up, and a second one coming down. Naturally I got so that I looked for a fish. On the last day of the season, I visited the stream with a friend, and when we came to the spot I told him

that I always took a trout from below that rock. I got the fish.

Another stream of high temperature, much fished by me some years ago, was of little worth after the first of June save at one point; there a number of springs, none of them large but undoubtedly supplying a respectable amount of water in the aggregate, kept the temperature low enough to attract brook trout. Since leaving that section of the country I have heard nothing of the stream. I wonder if the boys who used to marvel at my catches after all the other fellows gave it up, have stumbled upon my little secret. I was mean enough to keep the knowledge to myself when I moved away. Some day I hope to re-visit those scenes and if I do I shall surely whip that portion of the river, and I am sure that I will win a few good trout. Yes, it pays big to locate and fish the springs.

A BROOKSIDE SPRING

"More than once I have turned a threatened defeat into a certain victory, simply because I knew the location of a cold spring."—*Page 121*



LURES FOR USE WITH FLY RODS

"In recent years there has come into being a class of trout lures, produced by trout fisherman for use with fly-rods."—*Page 132*

CHAPTER XVI

BAIT-CASTING FOR TROUT

In April, 1914, *Outdoor Life* published an article by me upon casting for rainbow trout with short rod and artificial lures, the result being an avalanche of letters, questioning and critical; for any original method of fishing—life or thought, as for that—must needs come in for its portion of criticism: we expect it. So it is not my purpose here to present a brief for trout bait-casting, knowing full well that to do so would stuff my mail-bag unanswerably full, as well as rupture some lifelong friendships. However, there is rare sport in casting for trout, using proper tackle; furthermore, the variety of tackle makes not the man. It is a new sport, and an enjoyable one. Granted, dear critic, right here in this first paragraph, that there is no fishing like fly-fishing for trout—ye gods and little fishes, don't I know?—but if trout can be taken on other tackle, when they will not rise to flies, why should the "other tackle" be taboo?

I think I have said enough in the foregoing paragraph to convince you that I am a confirmed fly-fisherman; therefore I presume that you are ready to follow me into the "when and where" with not a little patience. Of course not all trout waters are adapted to the needs of the would-be bait-caster; and by bait-caster I of course mean a caster of artificial lures. First, the water must be both wide and deep; second, the fish must average well above "fingerlings." It would be next to impossible to wield a short casting rod in the circumscribed area of the average trout swim: there would not be room to handle the lure; furthermore, playing the fish from the reel would be out of the question. In the article referred to in the first paragraph, I pointed out that the theater of my first act with short rod and reel was a wide and deep river. Though I did not then name the stream, a number of correspondents guessed it, the Peshtigo River of Wisconsin. Since that experience I have resorted to the casting rod more than once, both for rainbow and brook trout, and I am free to confess that more and more I am coming to delight in the new way. So wherever there is plenty of water, the large fish showing a predilection for live bait, you will find that the short

rod, multiplying reel and casting lure will prove effective.

A number of agnostics have questioned regarding where the fun enters, and I have invariably answered, "At the same door it enters in bass casting." If there is sport in playing a two-pound bass with short rod and reel, there is an equal amount of fun in playing a trout in the same manner. If you say that a trout is a fly-taking fish, I will answer that the bass is also. If you say that there is more sport in playing a two-pound trout on a five-ounce fly-rod, I will answer that there is more sport in playing a two-pound bass on a fly-rod. The whole thing is about as short as it is long. The sport enters, as in all fishing, in playing the fish. There is no sport in just killing fish; it is the battle, come weal, come woe, that makes the game worth the candle.

On proper tackle—more regarding that in a moment—a pound, and up, fish will keep the angler busy far longer than he imagines. The bass manifests speed when he darts away at the end of a line; but he is as a freight-train to an express when compared with a thoroughly frightened two-pound speckled trout. If the water fished is composed of rapids and quiet pools al-

ternating, as was my portion last summer, and the fish rush up into the rapids, you will think yourself connected with the greatest bunch of trouble that ever wore pink gills.

Not every man can play a trout successfully from the reel. Imagine a fish, say a hundred and twenty-five feet away, just at the brink of a long, mad rapid, your bending, lithe rod keeping tune to the wild music of the humming line. Under such circumstances if you do not experience thrills of several kinds I will miss my guess. I have been there more than once, and even writing about it causes my heart to beat faster.

Another matter, the large fish, those sleepy (?) old fellows from the bottom of the pool, will be inveigled to the surface by your properly presented lure. Perhaps those ancient denizens are stirred by curiosity, I only know that they are stirred, and that is enough for me. The whole thing is un-trout-like, but it is mighty interesting and highly satisfactory.

In the matter of tackle the rod naturally comes in for the most attention, though I am not so sure that as much depends upon the rod, in the hands of a careful angler, as upon the reel; but be that as it may, the rod must be of the best, and as light as is commensurate with your skill.

My preference is for a rather longish rod, one of six feet six inches, being a favorite; though in time I may go to the regulation bass rod, for I held out against the shorter bass rod until all anglers considered me a crank. To get absolutely perfect action, the rod should be a one-piece, but because of unhandiness that is ruled out. My rod is a three-piece beauty, just so that it will go into a suitcase with little trouble; though I honestly think one would get better action from a short-butt long-tip construction. Whatever style of rod you select, secure one that has action and lots of it; not that it will be an aid in casting, but because it will add to the pleasure of playing the fish. If you find the long rod too awkward for casting, as you may if you are a devotee of the five-foot tool, I presume you will employ the latter.

As to the reel—well, your favorite will of course be the one you will employ; though I have a strong preference for the level-winder. I want to have my eyes free to behold the gyrations of the hooked fish. The only disadvantage of the level-winder is that it will not hold so much line, size for size, as the simple reel. I desire a long line, two hundred feet being none too much in the waters fished by me.

I am not going to spend much time discussing lures. Any of the lures that will take bass may prove attractive for trout. Thus far I have confined myself largely to minnow-like lures, and surface plugs, the medium-sized coaxer proving attractive, but rather light for distance casting. That plain German silver minnow I have found availing. Of course the rubber minnows, weighted, and lures of that ilk are good. I am inclined to think that almost any underwater lure will attract trout, though I have not experimented at length with over a dozen of the better known plugs. Here is a field that should attract the angler with time to squander.

I have found night far and away the better time, for casting; probably because the large fish, those more apt to be attracted by lures, are night feeders. All the radio-active lures are good; at least the three tried by me have proved so, especially when employed as underwater baits. (Any surface lure can be made an underwater by properly weighing the head, a small shot sometimes being sufficient.) In open country where there are no trees to interfere with the back-cast, and there is room to play the fish, I would strongly urge the tyro to attempt night casting. Be sure you are provided with a good gaff or

large landing net, as well as some sort of light, a pocket flash being convenient but hardly powerful enough for large water. Night bait-casting for trout is my choice, when I desire a new experience, one that is just disagreeable enough always to remain new. Thereby hangs a tale.

I purpose writing an article upon this subject some day, and only mention it here that as much information as possible may be found in this work. Anywhere that speckled trout are found along the shores of Lake Superior they may be taken with the short rod and reel. I know of no fishing more captivating and entrancing than that to be enjoyed where those great red rocks lift themselves above the water along the North Shore. Some large speckled trout are taken by the rodster who simply casts out into the lake amid the rocks. Undoubtedly if one were to cast upon the reefs, as described in Chapter 14, larger fish would be taken. It sometimes happens that an overgrown lake trout, *Cristivomer namaycush,* will take the hook; then he of the four- or five-ounce rod has his work cut out for him.

In conclusion, I would say that this is a field but little explored by anglers, but later will become very popular, more especially for rainbow

in large rivers and for lake trout, the species just mentioned; but just the same I believe that there is ample reason for including this chapter in "Trout Lore." The man who is privileged to fish waters adapted to this method is unwise if he does not investigate its possibilities.

CHAPTER XVII

TROUT AND THE NEW ARTIFICIAL LURES

FOR many years certain simple lures have been used to entice the speckled beauties from their hiding-place when bait and artificial flies proved unavailing. Probably spinners were first employed, losing size with the passing of the years until to-day they can be had small enough and light enough to cast well with the daintiest fly-rod, and meet the whims of the most fastidious angler. Then came "Devon minnows," "quill minnows," and multitudinous rubber baits, from life-like mice down to house flies, bees, and the like. I had little success with any of those lures save the quill minnow; that was light enough and attractive enough to be used with a fly-rod. Somehow the many bugs and bees I never found very successful, even worth using; but not so the minnow-like lures: under certain conditions they will take trout. In the last chapter we studied those heavy lures which should be handled with a casting rod, or let alone, for they will wreck any fly-rod worthy the name; and in Chapter

XIX we discussed the spinners, which can be cast with the average fly-rod almost as easily as can flies, so small are they. In this brief chapter I do not propose spending any time with either, respectfully referring my readers to Chapters XIX and XVI for my opinions. However, in recent years there has come into being a class of trout lures, produced by trout fishermen for use with fly-rods; lures that when properly used under propitious conditions fill the creel. I am not acquainted with all the angler's whims which have crystallized in minute lures, for every year new ones are produced; but with a few I have experimented and have found them good.

Here enters the old, old question of legitimacy. Can we use them without doing violence to our angler's conscience? Perhaps, as I have long suspected, I am something of a Philistine, therefore possessed of a biased judgment; but I cannot see how a man violates the ethics of true sport when he rightly employs such lures, so dapper, light and attractive are they, withal so much skill is required on the part of the rodster rightly to present them. Granted I prefer artificial flies, even as I prefer artificial flies to bait; but if, when flies fail as they sometimes do—

surely every disciple of Father Izaak will admit the truthfulness of this statement—why not the new lures if they will win fish? I possess a tiny silver minnow, weighing only a fraction of an ounce, that I can cast from the tip of my four-ounce fly-rod as easily and lightly as I do flies. Now I have demonstrated again and again that under certain conditions that bit of bright metal will take fish. Wherein am I violating any of the high ethics of sport when I resort to the minnow? I wish some more highly organized individual would rise and explain. Strikes me that all the world lacks the spirit of true sportsmanship, except thee and me, and sometimes thou art a wee shade off color!

Now that we have so satisfactorily settled the mooted sportsmanship question, the how, where, and when of the matter presents itself. Naturally not all streams lend themselves to the method with equal felicity. While the careful rodster can handle such lures on a small, brush-environed water, even as he can flies, it does not follow that it is the part of wisdom to employ the lures. They can be used upon a wadable meadow stream, for there the overhanging brush is not a constant menace, and the deep pools at angles of the stream offer opportunities for cast-

ing. However, it is upon the larger streams and lakes that the new lures are sure to be the most popular, for they seem more attractive to large fish than to small ones. (I am giving you the result of my own experience.) Undoubtedly some of the lures, particularly those of the floating variety, could be used upon small streams free of snags and brush provided they have current enough to carry the little enticers along. I have so employed the trout "Coaxer" and "Little Bob" with much interest and profit. As in fly-fishing, all depends upon the rodster. The lure must be guided into likely places, as well as kept in motion. In clear streams I have seen trout come out from their hiding-places and gaze upon the floater suspiciously or curiously, and return to their retreats without striking. Now, had those fish been attracted by the splashing of a cast bait or the gyrations of a swiftly moving one, they would have struck and investigated afterwards. In a small stream, if the current be not too swift, always work up, casting right and left into every likely looking place, exactly as you would with flies. When the wee lure strikes the water, begin to retrieve at once; do not wait for an instant, as you do with flies, for to pause

even for a second is to give the sharp-eyed trout time to discover the fraud.

But as intimated a moment ago it is to the larger rivers and lakes that we must turn for the best angling with this sort of counterfeit presentment. A boat and boatman will be needed. Few men can successfully manage a boat and cast at the same time. Of course where the fishing is deep and the boat can be anchored, it is a different proposition. I have worked such waters standing upon the top of a rock to which I had been ferried. I have slipped at a crucial moment and taken an involuntary cold bath too. Most of the fishing must be done from a moving boat, casting back under overhanging banks, behind rocks, under snags, fishing surface or deep, as occasion seems to demand. You will need to exercise all the skill and fish knowledge of which you are master in order to succeed at all. The stake for which you are playing is the exceptional fish, the big one that usually gets away. You will as a rule take larger fish than with other lures—at least that has been my experience—but you will not take many. Do not be surprised if at first you fail to stir a fish to attack; persevere and some day the results will surprise

you. The ranks of fly-rod bait-casters will never be overcrowded.

Some of these newer trout lures are made in the luminous style; consequently they are especially adapted to night fishing—I think not so much because the luminous lure attracts the fish as because the angler can follow its movements upon the surface of the water. I believe it has been amply proved that the radiant lure does attract fish, when kept in motion, though I am not prepared to say that it is of utmost value for trout. My experiments have been largely with other lures for night fishing, but the results have not been flattering. That I have stirred many fish to attack I know, but in the thick darkness I have found it extremely difficult to strike at the proper moment; as a result, unless the fish hooked himself at the first rush, I have come off second-best in the venture. What will happen to the average angler when he first essays night fishing with the little lures will try his patience and probably cause him to curse the man who put the idea into his head.

The subject of tackle may be passed with a word, the matter having been fairly well discussed as we have worked along. The rod should be slightly heavier and with a little more back-

bone, for the lures are as a rule somewhat heavier than those ordinarily employed with a fly-rod, and it is never the part of wisdom to run chances of straining a good tool. The line should be the regulation enameled silk, such as is used for fly-fishing. The reel of course should be the one you prefer, though, as I have said again and again in this book, that new reel, the quadruple adapted to fly-fishing, is just the thing. By no means attempt night fishing with a single action. When you must depend more or less upon the sense of feeling in your operations, you need a reel that can be speeded up quickly, and that will retrieve line as fast as an in-rushing trout can travel.

I presume that I shall be criticised for including this chapter in "Trout Lore"; but here we have a variety of trout fishing not much indulged in, yet one that has possibilities for the patient, painstaking angler, though it will never become very popular because one must be painstaking and patient. I am sure that the angler who goes up against some hopeless proposition, but happens to have in his kit a few of those little "trout plugs," will thank me for my words of advice. Then, too, the angler—and he is legion —who courts a new experience will thank me

for taking time to discuss this matter. I have a few trout lures, such as those of which I have been writing though I suppose there are many in the market of which I have never heard. Just try out this latest wrinkle in trout fishing, and, the word of my experience for it, you will say, "There is more in fishing for trout than I ever imagined."

CHAPTER XVIII

FISHING WITH THE DEEPLY SUNKEN FLY

THERE is fly-fishing and fly-fishing, yet there is no single best way of taking trout. The dry-fly purist insists that his is the most sportsman-like method of handling the fuzzy-wuzzy lures; a statement with which the wet-fly devotee promptly takes issue, as he should. Now, if the lover of the dry-fly method simply asserted that his way of handling the artificial flies was the most artistic, I am sure few would take issue with him. Too often, it seems to me, we confuse art and skill with sportsmanship; now, sportsmanship has to do with both, but depends upon neither. In order to add variety to the controversy between the two great schools of fly-fishermen, I am going to advocate in this chapter still another method. To be sure, fishing with a deeply sunken fly is fishing with a saturated wet fly, a very wet fly. Every bass fly-fisherman knows that to let his flies sink for a depth of six or eight inches is often very alluring to the bronze-backs. By the same token, under cer-

tain conditions, when after trout, to let the flies descend for a depth of two feet before retrieving is to tempt some sleepy old monster to attack that would not otherwise think of paying any attention to the lures. That is fishing with a deeply sunken fly. Sometimes it is necessary to attach a single shot to the leader about three inches above the fly, all depending upon the character of the water fished, the amount of current, etc. That the deeply sunken fly will upon occasion win trout I can testify.

I was fishing a rather sluggish stream, one possessed of few rapids but numbers of deep quiet pools, withal a stream noted for its numerous and large fish, being carefully stocked each season. My usual good luck had all but deserted me, being put to it to keep the camp frypan supplied with fish. It was not my fault, rather that of the Weather Man. It was the third week of a midsummer drought; not a drop of rain had fallen for that length of time, and consequently the stream was very low and the water unusually clear. Naturally the trout were exceedingly shy, loath to leave the dark shades of the deepest pools, and never found in the rapids. I dry-flied, wet-flied, and even resorted to "garden hackle" with but indifferent

results. As intimated a moment ago, it was only by dint of much labor that I managed to odorize the pan.

Returning disgruntled one morning after some three hours' fruitless work, I paused at the head of a little rapid which terminated in a deep pool, well shaded and provided with a reasonable amount of driftwood at one side. Now I knew that that pool must from the very nature of the case shelter a number of fish. How to make them bite, that was the problem. I sat down to think it over, idly turning the pages of my fly book, from reds to grays and back again. Suddenly a small bass fly, a Silver Doctor, freed itself from its clip and fluttered to the ground. There is a wee bit of superstition about every angler, and I took the fall of the fly for a good omen and fastened it to my leader, attaching a small shot, about a BB, a couple of inches above the feathers, arguing that its weight would add to my casting power. Keeping well back from the stream, I made my way to the lower side of the pool, up through the high grass until within casting distance. I cast, my fly striking the water well toward the head of the pool with a slight splash. I was disgusted. "Scared any trout that happened to be within a mile of that

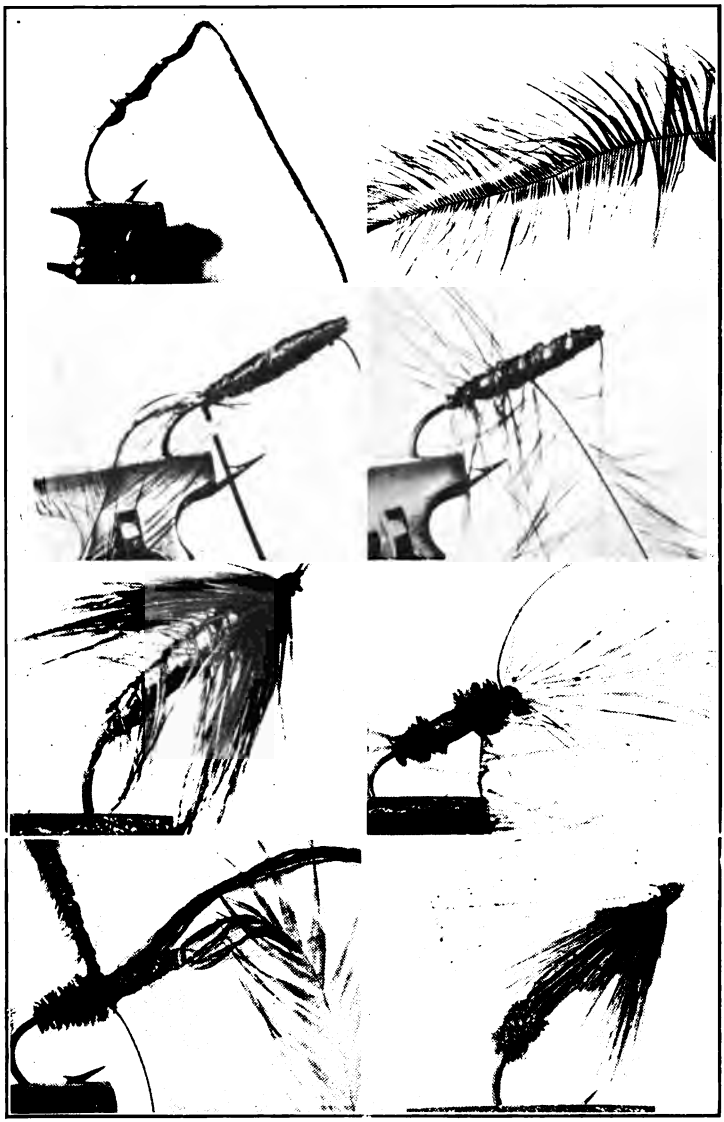
plunk," I told myself. I did not begin to reel at once, so the fly settled well toward the bottom of the pool before I placed a finger to the handle of the winch. Just because I was not interested in the affair I cranked slowly. Suddenly there was a sharp tug and I was fast in the first real good fish of the week. Coming to myself with a jerk, I coaxed that fish down out of the pool, played and netted him well below, went back and got another, and still another before the school, if school there were, became alarmed.

There were other pools of like character in the meadow, a number of which I visited, winning one or more trout from each. The riddle was solved. I had learned to fish with a "deeply sunken fly." Since then I have resorted to the trick—I think that is what it should be termed—when all other expedients failed, and uniformly with success. It seems impossible for the trout to resist the invitation of the slowly moving bunch of feathers, for attack it they will. What the fish imagine the feathers are is something of an enigma, though always the processes of a trout's mind are past finding out.

I have made quite a study of the flies adapted to the method and have no hesitancy in saying that the large flamboyant flies are by all odds the

THE DEEPLY SUNKEN FLY

"Keeping well back from the stream, I cast."—*Page 141*



TYING A FLY

Different stages in its production.

most attractive; indeed, I have found the uncouth Jungle Cock very alluring, with the Scarlet Ibis a close second. However, it is to my first love, the Silver Doctor, that I pin my faith, and seldom does it fail me. As said, the flies should be large—I have even used a salmon and regular bass size with good results; but my conclusion is that a large trout or small bass size is far and away the best. I have resorted to the method only when all others failed because of low, clear water, so I cannot say what flies would prove attractive under other conditions. I would not advise one to fish with deeply sunken flies simply for the sake of fishing with them, but only as a last resort when more legitimate methods fail.

Naturally the perfect rod for such fishing should have considerable backbone and will; though any rod can be used, other than the ultra light brook rods: the strain would be too heavy for them. The ordinary six-ounce rod of nine or ten feet will prove perfectly satisfactory providing it is not weak or whippy. In the matter of line, leader, and reel, nothing need be said; simply use your favorite. The leader should not be over six feet long; as a rule, I use one of less than four, all depending upon the size of

the stream to be fished. I would be guilty of carelessness should I dismiss the subject of tackle without saying something about a landing net or gaff, the size of the fish, usually taken with the deeply sunken fly demanding a good, dependable net or gaff. I have used those "trout nippers" with a great deal of satisfaction, as they do not take up any room, are not in the way when not needed, and are always ready to hold a fish when the angler has need for them. A landing tool is like the Westerner's revolver—"mighty handy when needed."

A few general remarks regarding handling the flies may not be out of order here. As to the number I would say not over two. I know that more than one fly is being cried out against in some quarters, and is made a crime in at least one State; still, I am in favor of two. Very seldom have I taken two fish at once—good ones I mean—but those occasions stand out red letter experiences in my ichthyic life, something to dream o'er when luck is bad. Two flies if you dare.

Always work from the lower side of the pool unless so large that you cannot cover all the water; then, of course, you will have to fish with the current—a method I have not found overly successful, however. If you must fish

with the current, either cast well over and reel up, or let the fly float down, without the shot of course, sink, and then reel. Again I warn you that fishing from above will not be apt to prove very successful. The fish either see you or discover the fraud. In casting from below, use all your casting ability, lay a long line and lay it without undue commotion, as you hope for a strike. Do not hurry; in fishing with the deeply sunken fly, the reward is to the patient. I suppose the method might be compared to trolling but to me it is far more fascinating, more depending upon the ability and judgment of the rodster. The angler must know where the fish lurk, where the currents swing, where the snags and other obstructions lie in wait: all this must he know, and more, if he is to angle successfully with the deeply sunken fly.

To illustrate the effectiveness of the deeply sunken fly let me narrate another happening as I conclude this chapter. I was fishing a large stream, wide and deep, yet a trout water, strange as it may seem to those who think of speckled trout as "brook trout." The fishing was "off color." I had resorted to bait, artificial lures, spoons, everything in fact that could be supposed to attract trout; but all to no purpose.

One day a bass fisherman passed through my camp, his hat decorated with rather large bass flies; whether or not they were used for other than ornamental purposes I did not stop to inquire. When the bass lover departed three of his flies remained behind, a Silver Doctor, Royal Coachman and Scarlet Ibis. Along toward the edge of evening I took my canoe, crossed over to the shady side of the river, where I knew the water was deep and the bottom little better than a stone-pile. Taking all the time in the world, I arranged a shotted cast, Silver Doctor for end fly and Royal Coachman as dropper, and sent the combination close up inshore, where the low-hanging trees leaned out over the quiet water. I waited for nearly a minute, while the flies went down, down. The water was fully fifteen feet deep. Then slowly I reeled in. Before those flies had moved ten feet I was fast in a good trout; and a second fish struck before the first reached the boat. Such a battle! It does my heart good to remember it. Up and down that shore-line I worked by boat, the result being that before the gathering darkness made such angling impossible, an even dozen fish had found their way into my creel.

Always you will find the larger fish, the sleepy

denizens of the dark pools, attacking the deeply sunken fly. The small fish are always surface feeders, far more active than the overgrown grandfathers.

Perhaps this method of taking fish may not appeal to my readers, but nevertheless you will find it well worth investigating if you are confronted with conditions adapted to it.

CHAPTER XIX

HOW TO TIE ARTIFICIAL FLIES

EVERY trout fisherman should learn to tie flies for himself; for the day will inevitably come when his fly-book will not meet the needs of the occasion. More than once I have turned certain defeat into as certain victory by my skill with thread and feathers. To be able to match any stream-need is a most valuable asset. Now that I have said that, let me hurry and add that most of us nevertheless will be willing to purchase our flies from master-craftsmen like Miss Frost and Mrs. Keene; for only after long experience is it possible to produce such perfect specimens of the fly-tier's art. I sometimes think that the fly-tier is born, not made. Some of us can never get the feathers to lie in place, or the finished fly to appear smooth and even; after we have failed again and again, we will be more than willing to pay a dollar a dozen, and more, for our fuzzy-wuzzy lures. Never mind if you cannot produce a perfectly shaped fly; it

is dollars to doughnuts that the scraggly object you can fashion will take fish almost as readily.

In the brief compass of this chapter I can tell you how to tie one or two flies only, but the method is very much the same for all. For further information see "Artificial Flies and How to Tie Them," Shipley; "How To Tie Flies For Trout and Grayling," McClelland; "Salmon and Trout," Harris; "Trout-Stream Insects," Rhead; or the author's "Fly Tier's Work-bench" which ran in *Outer's Book* from October, 1912, to August, 1913.

The tools required are few and simple. A professional fly-tier's vise is very convenient, but for the tyro a simple toy-vise from the ten-cent store will serve as well. You will need a pair of embroidery scissors and a pair of spring pliers or tweezers. All the other articles you can get along without. Indeed you can get along without a vise; you will have to when on the bank of a trout stream, so it is well to learn how in the beginning. As to materials: a feather duster from the ten-cent store will supply feathers, a bit of shoemaker's wax (lacking the special wax made for fly-tying) some shellac varnish, a spool of winding silk, and a few snelled hooks. Remember, this is a short-cut to fly-tying, so you

can use the snelled hooks instead of following the better method of snelling your own.

The easily made Hackle is a good fly to begin on. Place one of the snelled hooks in the vise, shank up, and pass a waxed thread several times about the shank. (See illustration.) Now build up a body for the insect-to-be, shaping it as you desire, using mohair, cotton, even twine. Hold the body in shape with several turns of the waxed thread, working back to the bend of the hook. Take a feather ("hackle") by the extreme point between thumb and forefinger of the left hand, and with thumb and forefinger of the right hand, stroke the fibers downward so that they will stand out. With the hanging waxed thread catch in the very tip of the feather and, holding the silk against the midrib, pass the feather about the shaped body. You will be surprised to see how the little filament will stand out "like quills on the fretful porcupine." With a pinpoint, pick out all filaments that may catch under. Fasten the thread about the end with three or four half-hitches; cut off the quill; place a drop of shellac at the end; and you are done. On the stream's bank you may have to get along without the shellac, though an unprotected fly will not stand much grief. I have used a bit of

soft pitch for the purpose, and even a drop of melted chewing-gum.

The day will come when you must needs tie a fly possessed of wings, like the Royal Coachman, for illustration. Begin exactly as you did before. At the head catch in a hackle for legs, and a couple of white feathers for wings. Now take up the filaments of peacock herl and pass them carefully about the body-form, working with the waxed thread in the same hand. As you wind the body with herl be careful to keep the winding silk underneath. Tack the ends of herl in position with two or three turns of the waxed silk. Now wrap the hackle in position about the head, "feet" sticking backward over the body; a little experience will enable you to hackle very creditably. You will note this difference between the fly we are now tying and the one just tied: in the former the hackle—"feet"—extended the whole length of the body, while in the latter it is found beneath the wings only. When the hackles are all picked out, bend back the two white feathers, "wings," and bind them in position with the waxed thread. Now place a drop of shellac on the head of your fly and it is complete.

Before attempting to build a fly, study the

finished "insect," as tied by a skilled workman. It is a good plan to dissect two or three well tied flies, studying their formation as you unwind. The attaching of a tail, as would be required in the Professor, say, is a simple matter. The filaments which are to compose the tail should be attached when the wings and legs are affixed (Fig. 6.) and bound in position with the herl. It is not nearly as difficult to tie a fly as it sounds or appears.

From these directions and drawings it will be easy to take up the many variations in form and color. A red tag at the rear can be added from floss or even wool yarn. If a red waist is needed, like the Royal Coachman's, the red wool is tacked in when the body is being shaped, and wound about the form, the end being covered with herl or other body material. From the above you will get a smattering of fly-tying knowledge, enough to make a fly if necessity demands that you must. Naturally many questions will arise regarding material as well as concerning methods, all of which are answered in the works referred to in the second paragraph of this chapter.

It is surprising how much material one can discover, material too that will build a fly as at-

tractive to the fish as some of the finished products of the expert artist. For instance, the blue jay will furnish blue feathers of wonderful color and texture, as will also the kingfisher. (You remember "The Blue Jay Feather," published in March, 1915, *Outdoor Life.*) We have common birds with bright red feathers; all you have to do is to keep your eyes open when walking in the country and you can pick up feathers that will supply your needs. A friend of mine is owned by a parrot, (I speak with care) and the feathers her master drops are brought to me; as a result many a beautiful little fly finds its way into my book. Then, too, if you wish to go into the matter somewhat extensively you can purchase a white cock and from his neck secure enough hackle to supply your tool-box with reds, grays, browns, etc., for with Diamond Dyes you can easily dye to the required color. Of course dyed colors are not as durable as natural ones, but the chances are that the colors will outlast the fly. I have little trouble. Last year while dyeing I happened to produce a few bunches of a wonderful purple color; and, do you know, they made up into flies unlike any natural insect I have ever seen, but those flies took trout on bright days. All of which proves what I have

elsewhere said, "You never know what a trout wants."

I have created temporary flies out of thread, green grass, and flower petals. From a raveled bit of red handkerchief I have more than once fashioned a killing fly. Why, you can make a very creditable white miller from the fuzzy bark of a white birch. The common barnyard fowls —turkeys, guinea hens, ducks, pigeons—all these will supply feathers. If you do not hunt ducks and have a friend who does, cultivate him: it will be worth your while. I have made a trout "buck-tail" out of hairs from a gray squirrel's caudal appendage. I might write of makeshift material for an hour and not mention all of the material that you can press into service. "If needs must, needs can."

So I have lightly touched this matter, seeking only to give you a smattering of knowledge, but enough to serve should you come up against a day when your fly-book fails to meet the needs of the hour, the trout rising to something other than you possess. If, as has been more than once asserted, "necessity is the mother of invention," then the angler can always discover fly-material which he can press into service for the time being. Let me urge upon you, if you de-

sire to know something of the fly-tier's art, that you invest in some standard work upon the subject. However, as said in the opening paragraph, it is far better to purchase flies ready made unless you have plenty of time at your command. You cannot learn to "tie a fly to a miracle" in a single evening's practise; expertness comes only after long and patient effort. It is possible for even a duffer to tie a fly, however, using the rudest material, that will win fish. I have inserted this chapter in "Trout Lore" because urged to do so by a number of anglers who said it was needed.

CHAPTER XX

TOGS FOR TROUT FISHERMEN

At first thought this chapter has no place in a book displaying such a title as does this, but as the work has grown and enlarged under my hand, in response to many requests and questions from all over the United States, it is inevitable that I devote some little space to so important a matter as clothing. As first planned, "Trout Lore" was to have to do with the habits of the sly beauties and with fishermen's wiles only, but I soon discovered that I must bring in tackle, for it is impossible to write intelligently of trout from the angler's view-point without discussing the means employed to capture them. Consequently it now becomes imperative that I devote a chapter to the trout fisher's wearing apparel; for proper habiliments is second in importance only to tackle: the following paragraph on foot-wear will prove the assertion. Let me say right here that I am not interested in the manufacture of any of the articles mentioned; neither have I "an ax to grind"; simply I have

used and investigated and know whereof I speak.

Did you ever sit down with some complete tackle catalogue open before you and study the foot-wear provided for trout fishermen? If you have, you already know what a complete line is offered, and what large sums can be expended. Undoubtedly the best thing for the trout fisherman are mackintosh waders, coming to the waist and held in position by an extra pair of suspenders. They are made with boot feet, or to be worn with wading shoes. The latter are best. As to price, they range from $8. up to $22. for best quality. Their great advantage lies in the difficulty with which they "fill." A trout fisherman seldom gets in above the waist, or should, but when he does—we will discuss that in a moment. Naturally the mackintosh waders and stockings are more durable than the plain rubber boots, but they also are more expensive. Next in the list I place the rubber hip-boots, somewhat heavier in proportion to length than the waders, and, because of their greater tendency to slip, more dangerous; however, there is a little contrivance on the market, a sort of auxiliary shoe, known as Bennett Wading Sandal, well provided with hobnails, which straps on over the boot and makes it absolutely safe. The cost of

the sandal is but $2., and it will outwear a number of boots. Hip-boots cost up to $8. for the best. The thigh-boots, good for small streams and wading through rain-soaked grass, of course are somewhat cheaper; but when you wear them you are pretty sure to be tempted to reach out for some likely looking spot and go in over their tops; and a rubber boot, wader, anything of the sort, filled with water is mighty uncomfortable. The writer must plead guilty to using a medium-priced hip-boot in nearly all of his trout fishing. The reason I buy the medium-priced boot is because with the best of care any rubber boot will "rot" in three or four seasons. I keep mine in a cool place and get great service out of them.

Owing to the fact that I have a touch of rheumatism, and my muscles are apt to stiffen and cramp in cold water, I wear waders, as confessed above; but it is much better to wear woolen underclothes and stockings, hobnailed shoes that will not slip, and go right into the water, changing clothes when the fishing is ended. Waders are dangerous! To fall when wading a rapid stream and have the waders or hip-boots fill, is to run chances of drowning. Each year fishermen meet their death through wearing hip-boots. If you happen to step into a

deep hole when fishing in quiet water and get beyond your depth, your only hope lies in being able to kick off your boots, sometimes an impossibility. So I repeat, waders are dangerous. As to keeping dry, well, on a hot day the active man does not keep very dry on the inside of rubber, as I can testify from long experience. The mackintosh waders are not as warm, perhaps, as the regulation hip-boots, though both will induce copious perspiration. One's feet will literally "cook" in rubber boots on a hot day unless standing in cold water all the time. In wading a stream with deep holes the angler is always worrying for fear that he will step in over their tops.

Another matter, anything I have ever used in the way of waterproof foot-wear will puncture, and in spite of automobile repair shops it is exceedingly difficult to repair a leaky boot. Rubber boots and waders of all sorts are cumbersome, heavy, and hard to carry to and from the stream, yet you will see me climbing on board the morning train, rod in one hand and rubber-boots thrown over the other shoulder.

In the matter of clothing there are many men of many minds. Some want a light coat, while others cannot be induced to put one on unless

early in the season. Some of my friends wear a sort of skeleton coat, a convenient affair of pockets without sleeves, and a few effect the tailless Jarvis fishing coat; needless to add the latter are confirmed waders who "go right in after 'em." All these coats are good, but my personal preference is for the "Duxbak." Yes, I know all about that—it is heavy, warm and all the rest of it; but when I am caught out in the rain I laugh at the other fellows. You are going to sweat anyway, if you fish at all, so why let that bother you? I want sleeves to my coat on account of the flies and mosquitoes; and I desire plenty of pockets, cannot have too many. Whatever cloth is chosen it is a good plan to select that which partakes of the character of duck; it is closely woven, will not catch "stick-tights," and wears well. I do not wear a vest, preferring to carry a heavy sweater for cold days, as it can be easily stowed away when not needed, even in the game pocket of the coat. I wear a waterproof hat of the same material as the coat. The trousers are of the knee variety —not so much cloth to fill up the waders, and rather decent looking when on the train. Light shoes and leggings can be worn if you so desire.

Whatever you wear, select clothes that will endure hard usuage.

If you prefer light-weight clothing, yet wish some protection in case of rain, let me give you a hint. Buy a square of oil-cloth, cut a slit in the center for your head, and wear it poncho-wise. You will be surprised at the amount of wear you can get out of a single square of common table oil-cloth. It can be procured at any country store, will roll up into a compact bundle that will take up but a little room in your "skirt pocket," creel, or even wader-leg. Another wrinkle: take a common heavy raincoat and cut off the skirts "all 'round about," like the old woman in the Mother Goose tale, of a proper length to cover the tops of the waders: you will be surprised to find how convenient and altogether serviceable a pea-jacket you will have.

"To wear gloves when fishing is the mark of effeminacy," writes a correspondent whose letter lies open before me. I wear gloves. I am one of those unfortunate thin-skinned individuals who burn every time they brave the sun, though exposed every day for a month, and whom the flies and mosquitoes poison outrageously. To protect the backs of my hands I wear

gloves. I have purchased special fishing gloves, made of soft, pliable leather, with short fingers, for which I have paid fancy prices; but I have gone back to worn-out dress gloves. Just cut off the finger tips, at least the thumb and fore finger; that is all you need do and you will have a perfect fishing glove. When they get stiff and hard, oil them with almost anything. I always keep a pair in my fish creel so that I am never without their welcome protection. I know of nothing more soul-harrowing than to have a rampant black-fly or three or more bloodthirsty mosquitoes alight on the back of your reel-hand just when you are playing the big fish of the day.

The head-net is not an unmixed blessing. I never had patience to wear one for any length of time when the trout were biting, and I have been driven from the stream more than once by bloodthirsty insects. Somehow the head-net hampers one's movements, blinds and smothers. I would rather battle with the enemy. I sometimes fasten a handkerchief to the back of my hat, letting it fall down beneath my coat collar, to protect my neck; but I must have my face open to the air and world. Undoubtedly there are times when the head-net is an absolute neces-

sity, though I have never endured one for over five minutes.

This naturally brings us to the question of fly-dope, though perhaps it has no connection with the subject of this chapter. I have tried out many of the dopes on the market and I am ready to say all are good though there are days when the most evil smelling concoction the druggist is able to mix is but a slight deterrent. More than once, when without "ointment," I have resorted to bacon fat, smearing face and neck with the odious stuff until I looked and smelled like the "greasy Eskimo." Bacon grease is good—while it lasts, which is true also of the many preparations upon the market. The trout fisherman is bound to sweat copiously and any ointment will be washed from the face in short order, so the stuff must be renewed again and again. Simple oil of tar is good but your face will be apt to assume and retain for some time a darker tint than the noble Red Man. It is a good plan to anoint the face with glycerine, well rubbed in, before applying any of the dopes. It is not the part of wisdom to apply any old thing to your face that Tom, Dick, or Harry recommends. Some years ago I got a druggist in a small town to mix me up some dope which

he warranted to keep all insects away. I cannot testify as to its virtues as an insect repellant; I only know that it blistered my face in a horrible manner and that I put in a week of untold torture. The following are two very good and tried "dopes":

Nessmuk's "Woodcraft" is not referred to very often these days but his fly dope is still good. Pine tar, 3 oz.; castor-oil, 2 oz.; oil of pennyroyal, 1 oz. Simmer all together over a slow fire and bottle. This makes a large amount, one-fourth of it being sufficient for a single person for two weeks.

It is no disparagement of Nessmuk to say that Dr. Breck has given us a better and more efficacious ointment. This is taken from the Doctor's book, "The Way of the Woods," which should be in every outdoor man's library. "Pine tar, 3 oz.; olive (or castor) oil, 2 oz.; oil of pennyroyal, I oz.; citronella, 1 oz.; creosote, 1 oz.; camphor (pulverized) 1 oz.; large tube carbolated vaseline. Heat the tar and oil and add the other ingredients; simmer over a slow fire until well mixed. The tar may be omitted if disliked, or for ladies' use." This is my favorite and a bottle is always in my creel and tackle box during fly-time. It has healing properties which

are peculiarly grateful to my "thin skin." Do not expect a miracle from any dope, for as said there are days when nothing under Heaven, not even pungent smoke, will discourage flies.

In conclusion let me say, going back to the subject of this chapter, it is a wise plan to wear light woolen under-clothing even in hot weather, for you are bound to sweat until your clothing is wringing wet, and damp woolen will not chill you as will cotton, should one of those sudden changes of temperature take place, so characteristic of the trout country. It is never the part of wisdom to run chances, or to rough it when you can smooth it. There are many points in the matter of clothing which I have not touched upon, many articles which I have omitted, but I only hope that I have dropped a few suggestions that will be of value to the trout fisherman.

CHAPTER XXI

THE GO-LIGHT OUTFIT TO-DAY

No variety of angling lends itself so admirably to the desires of the go-light angler as does brook trout fishing. In these days it has come to pass that the statement of Father Izaak is literally true: "Ye may walk and there is no man shall wist whereabout ye go." You can carry all your fishing paraphernalia in your handbag; indeed, even in your inside coat pocket. Some years ago, when I was traveling up and down a certain line of railroad, I desired an inconspicuous outfit that I could carry in my handbag; for that railroad ran through an excellent trout region. Gradually I got together an almost ideal collection of what I termed "secret angling tools," and many an hour's rare sport I had while waiting for trains or meals. Now the "go-light" outfit may consist of just three articles: rod, reel and line, and fly-book: or it can be enlarged to include folding creel, landing net, and camera; or it can be still further enlarged to include shelter-tent, cooking outfit and bed-

blanket. In this chapter I shall treat of the three varieties of go-light outfits as I have outlined them. Always bear in mind that these are outfits reduced to the last possible ounce, and consequently may lack a number of articles generally regarded as necessary. In this connection it is well to remember that the actual necessaries of life are few and the luxuries many. My home is overrun with fishing tackle, rods, reels, and tackle vanities—those numerous little knickknacks precious in our eyes but when the last word is said, the addenda of the outfit. Come now, let us reduce the outfit to the absolute essentials.

For the coat-pocket outfit, the rod joints must be short enough to stow away in an inside pocket without inconvenience. Shall we say that the joints must not be over twelve inches in length? Well and good; I have such a rod, called, I believe, in the catalogue, the "Sunday rod," probably for obvious reasons. Naturally the action of such a rod—it is eight feet, six inches long and possesses six ferrules—is not quite as perfect as a three-piece rod; but what will you? In order to secure joints you must needs sacrifice a certain amount of resiliency. Such a rod is not a make-believe rod nor a baby tool; but a sure-

enough fly-rod, one that will handle a fly satisfactorily and, in the hands of a careful angler, land a large trout. It is not for me to say which fly-book, for every angler has his favorite. Also the reel and line will be a matter of preference. Than the foregoing a more simple outfit cannot be devised unless you cut a rod on the stream's bank and tie your line to the end thereof. With all due respect and deference for boyhood days, there is little sport in capturing trout without giving them a chance to escape or having the opportunity of playing them.

During those years of which I wrote in the opening paragraph of this chapter, one June afternoon I found myself in a little town where I was to speak in the evening, and with some three or four hours at my disposal. Of course I was garbed à la rostrum, but that was a matter of secondary importance. Borrowing a straw hat and pair of rubbers, I made my way to a little creek some half-mile or so from town. Naturally I said nothing regarding my purpose, nor mentioned the little rod, vest-pocket fly-book and reel reposing so inconspicuously in my pockets. It proved one of those rare days when the trout were "jumping crazy for the fly," and such sport as I had it is almost sacrilegious to

tell about. The shade of every overhanging bank, leaning willow and outstretching alder seemed to shelter one or more trout. Bringing all of my trout lore, of which I have told in the foregoing chapters, into play, I stole along that stream like an Indian on the warpath, taking, instead of gory scalps, gold and crimson fish fresh from cold spring water. I had no creel, so I cut a forked stick and strung my trout with all the gusto of boyhood days. At supper time, when I returned to the place of my entertainment, the surprise of my host and hostess knew no bounds; the manner in which they marveled over my "string" lead me to believe that they spoke the truth when they said that not for five years had such a string of trout been taken from the little creek. I could multiply illustrations if I desired to do so, for many times has that little coat-pocket outfit of mine opened the doors of a piscatorial Paradise to me.

In assembling the suitcase outfit we are going to select another rod; this time it will be seven and a half feet long, five joints of eighteen inches, with but four ferrules. Here we get better action because the joints are longer. The rod which is used here as an illustration is an old battle-scarred veteran which has been packed by

me over a goodly portion of the North Country, was in at the finish of my record rainbow a few years ago, and though long since laid on the shelf as a keepsake, would still, I believe, do valiant battle if necessity should require. You can get a suitcase rod with but four joints of twenty-three inches, if you so desire. Naturally, such a rod would give you better action, as you would eliminate one pair of ferrules, always advantageous. The rods of which I have been writing are cheap, selling below five dollars; but if you care to pay more you can—"Thomas" makes one he sells at sixty-five dollars! In addition to the rod, fly-book, and reel, we have a folding creel, collapsing landing-net, and camera; all of which takes up but little room, weighs only a few pounds, and can be toted by any man or woman. As to the utility of a creel nothing need be said, for it is impossible to keep trout in good condition without some sort of receptacle in which to pack them. The landing net, too, steps in and saves the record fish. And as to the camera, well, I would rather a few fish less were found in my creel at night than a full basket and no pictorial record. The farther away from an outing I get, the more value my pictures.

I have called this a suitcase outfit because even

the rod can be packed; but the whole outfit is adapted to day-long trips into the country by motorcycle or afoot. As intimated above, you can pay almost any amount for a rod; and so of all the other articles. I would urge you to purchase the best possible folding camera; and settle upon some dependable landing net. Do not experiment unless you have time and money to burn; better far take the advice of some "been there" brother of the angle.

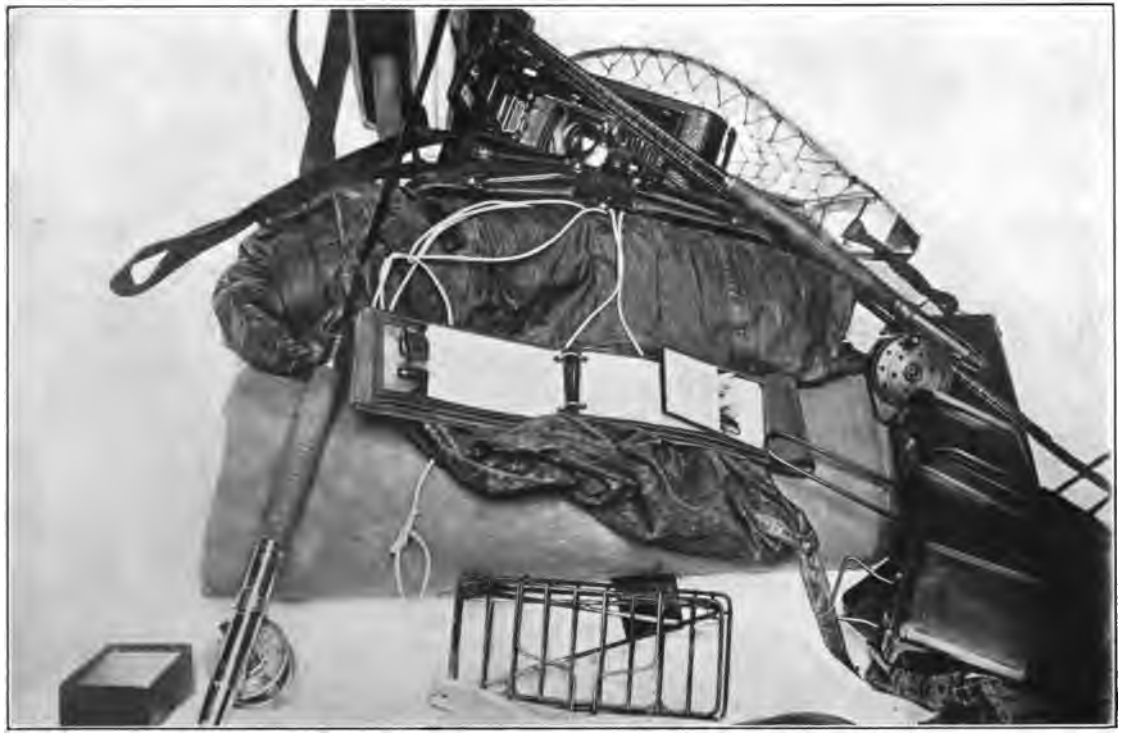
Now we come to the last of our three outfits—that of the ruck-sack. I am going to select a regulation rod this time, not because the two former rods are not satisfactory but because the three-joint rod naturally gives better action, and for the sake of variety. I am a lover of the split-bamboo rod, that illustrated being one of my favorites, light and resilient to a fault, yet with plenty of backbone; however, the steel rod shown with it is certainly fine for the sort of fishing the pack fisherman would be apt to strike—the unknown. This is that Bristol telescopic which locks at any given length, and is therefore ideal for the fellow who does not know just what sort of fishing he is going up against—the man who takes his home upon his back and fares forth. Naturally, it is somewhat heavier than the wood

companion with which it rubs reel-bands, but for that very reason it is more suitable for pack-work.

After the rod come the reel and the fly-book, of which we have nothing to say because we believe so much. You will note that I have changed landing nets, that shown being about the handiest one I know; folding, it slips down into the ruck-sack out of the way or can be carried at the belt. The same folding creel and camera appear, for than the former there is none better known to me, and I cannot afford a faster camera.

The cooking outfit shown is the "Stopple Kook-Kit," than which there is nothing more complete upon the market; with it I, or any other man, can live off the land with no difficulty. Two cups, two fry-pans, a kettle, and an out-door stove, all in small compass. The trout fisherman who does not pause by the stream's side long enough to fry a mess of fish fresh from the water is missing a great joy, one of the inalienable rights of the lineal descendants of Izaak Walton.

Just an ordinary bed-blanket is used in this outfit, though a sleeping-bag would be better. The rolled-up shelter-tent is the one known to the trade as "Compac." It is big enough for



THE RUCK-SACK OUTFIT

Split Bamboo and Steel Rods; Fly Book; Reels; "Stopple Kook-Kit;" Landing Net—Barnes; Camera; Blanket; "Compact Tent"; Ruck-Sack.

ALL SET FOR THE FEAST

two but small enough for one; and, best of all, it weighs only three and three-fourths pounds. The case in which this outfit is carried is the rucksack of Alpine fame; though any pack-sack which meets your fancy may be used.

As you look this outfit over, not a single essential has been omitted; yet the pack is down to the smallest imaginable compass and is not heavy enough to tire a man should he be compelled to carry it all day long.

At first thought it would seem that this chapter is utterly out of place; but as you come to think it over, all that is contained herein is a part of "trout lore." Within reach of all cities located in what may be styled "the trout belt," there are little unimportant, as well as important, trout streams, where the weary office worker can find rest and recreation over night. More than once have I found my way to some favorite trout creek, my little outfit on my back, with just time enough before dark to erect my simple tent, and catch and cook a mess of fish. Then to lie by the side of the purling stream and watch the deep shadows creep in from the darkening East while the birds sang their evening songs, and linger until the stars came out and began their silent march across "that inverted bowl we call the

sky." Then in the morning, up with the birds, offering flies instead of worms to the early fish, and back in the city ready to begin business clear-eyed and clear-brained. Trout lore! Had it not been for my many, many camps, night long, week long, month long, by the side of silvery streamlets and mighty waters, this work would never have come into being.

Wife and I have gone into the woods time and again, with our whole commissary department, home, and sporting tools upon our backs, to return at the end of our vacation, brown-cheeked and red-blooded, possessed of new knowledge of the out-o'doors, and with greater respect for those wise ones who live from choice close to the soil. So I have gained my knowledge of trout ways, and so I have had many a delightful outing. I think you will agree with me that, for the writer, migratory camping forms an important part of "Trout Lore." If this chapter shall have tempted you to go and do likewise, I am satisfied; that is, providing you yield to the temptation. All the way along I have tried to show you that not outfit, but the man, is of supreme importance: a truth which reaches the *n*th power in this chapter. My remarks regarding the cooking of trout are reserved for the next.

CHAPTER XXII

THE TROUT IN THE PAN

I HAVE in my library an old English work upon the ways of trout, to which is appended a chapter upon cookery, the importance of which no outdoor man will question; so I insert without further apology such a chapter in "Trout Lore." The article upon cooking in that ancient angling book begins with this naïve sentence: "First catch your trout"—a sage bit of advice, by the way, as more than one would-be culinary artist can testify. Perhaps it is presumptuous in me to add a word to the sentence of the long-dead monk but I should like to insist that you catch your trout *yourself;* perhaps that is what he meant. Be it known that only those who have actually learned how to stalk and capture the wily spotted denizens of the swift water and shaded pools, have seen the lissom rod bend perilously while the straining gossamer thread sang a song of victory in staccato notes, can appreciate the true flavor of the firm sweet fish. But to come down out of the clouds: Trout cooked

right by the stream, almost lifted from the water into the pan, is no more like the fish carried all day e'en though packed in ice, than a peach from the Italian's stand around the corner is like the fruit fresh plucked beneath California's blue skies. Leaving the environment out of the question, and there is not the shadow of a doubt but that it adds a certain piquant tang, trout should be cooked by the stream from which taken. In order that we may get at the matter conveniently, we will first talk of cooking trout as accomplished when the angler is provided with all the requisite tools, and work our way down to the man provided only with fish, a match, and an out-of-door appetite.

Baked trout: The first requisite for baking, after you have the fish, is the baker. After many experiments I have come to the conclusion that there is no baking contrivance equal to the reflecting type of oven. (I should say "we" throughout this chapter, for my wife knows more about the matter than I and has carried on most of the experiments.) Somehow the open baker gives the fish a flavor, a tang from the open fire, that the fish baked in a closed oven lacks. Dress the fish carefully, leaving the head on for good measure. Moisten the skin with butter or ba-

con-drippings—I prefer the latter—and place in the pan with a thin slice or two of bacon within the body cavity as well as three or four in the pan. You can use butter if you prefer, or any kind of fat if you must. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set near the fire at first, until the skin begins to brown; then set back and bake slowly. Be careful not to over-bake or the meat will dry out and become somewhat tasteless. Baste frequently with juices.

I caught a three-pound *fontinalis* last season, and cooked as above; and a more delicious morsel I never tasted.

Sometimes we make a stuffing as follows: Moisten bits of dry bread, the dryer the better, in warm water; squeeze out superfluous moisture with hands, add salt, pepper, celery seed, or sage, or finely chopped onion. Place this stuffing within the body cavity, not forgetting the slices of bacon mentioned above, and either sew in or wind string about the body. Should there be more stuffing than the body-cavity will contain, pile in one corner of the dripping pan.

The above directions can be followed also if baking in a closed oven.

Trout baked in clay: If you can find clay of the right consistency, red or gray, take your

trout just as it came from the water and rub clay over the body, head, gills and all. When the first coating has set somewhat, add more, until you have covered the whole body to a depth of three inches or more. Dry by the fire for fifteen minutes or so. Bury in the hot coals and ashes until clay is baked dry and hard. Pull the brick out of the fire and break open with the camp ax. The intestines will have shrunk to a little black ball and can be lifted out with a forked stick. The back-bone will easily separate from the flesh. Eat the meat from the half shell, as it were, or lift free; the skin will stick to the clay. Season after cooking, of course.

Planked trout: While a trout cannot be planked as successfully as can a black bass, owing to its body-form, still it can be so cooked and is truly delicious. If you do not possess a ready-made plank of sweet hardwood—oak, maple, beech—split one some two or three inches thick; prop in front of fire until piping hot. Split the trout down the back but not through the belly skin, and open like a book. Clean thoroughly and wipe dry. Nail to hot plank, wide open, skin side down; be sure to drive one nail through the thick part of the tail. Set in front of the fire. Tend carefully, basting continually with a

piece of bacon tied to a stick held above it. Reverse the plank frequently so that both ends of trout will cook equally. When done, serve on the plank, first seasoning to taste. Preserve the plank for a second fish: you will want it.

Boiled trout: While I am not partial to boiled trout, it serves as a change in diet—important if on a long camping expedition. Only large fish, from two pounds up, should be boiled. Dress, removing all the fins, but leave the head on, as it helps to hold the fish together. Wrap the fish securely in a clean cloth, and tie or sew. Have the kettle full of boiling water, well salted, to which a little vinegar or the juice of a lemon has been added. Fish boil quickly; allow about five minutes to the pound. It should be served with a sauce, of which there are several. This is good: Two tablespoons of bacon fat or butter; one of flour; ¼ of salt, and sufficient pepper to add flavor. Rub all of these ingredients together, beating well. Pour on about two cups of boiling water and cook for two minutes. Serve at once.

Trout chowder: Once more I must confess myself not altogether in sympathy with the dish; and yet I give it for the sake of variety and for those who like chowder. Dress about four

pounds of trout; cut into convenient pieces, removing bones. Take a half-pound of bacon or fat pork chopped, and fry in the bottom of the camp kettle. Add two medium-sized onions, sliced fine, and fry until brown. Have ready eight large potatoes sliced lengthwise. If you have a skimmer, remove the bits of onion, not forgetting to replace them when kettle is ready for closing; but if you are without that convenient implement, leave the onion where it is. Now add a layer of fish, then one of potatoes, one of fish, and one of potatoes, and so on until kettle is full or your supply of ingredients is exhausted. Sometimes I add a slice of bacon to each layer. Pour over all sufficient boiling water to fill kettle within two inches of top; cover and cook twenty-five or thirty minutes. Dish out and serve. Let each season with salt and pepper to suit his taste. Some camp cooks add any vegetables they happen to have—carrots, turnips, etc.; but I—well, I do not.

Fried trout: Again and again I have been called upon to inform my correspondents of "some other way of cooking trout than frying, for we are sick unto death of fried trout." I cannot understand that. I have had fried trout once a day and sometimes twice, for a whole

month and not grown weary of it. Cooks usually boil fish in fat, for that is cook-book "frying," but I do not; I "sauté," properly speaking. Dress the fish and wipe dry; if recently caught, sever the back-bone midway between head and tail to prevent curling. Remove the heads unless you can stomach "pop-eyes." If the pan is going to be crowded, better clip the tails, for they stick. Have ready a bed of flameless hot coals; lacking that, three stones or a camp-grate (see last chapter), and plenty of *small* twigs for firewood. Do not attempt to fry fish over a large fire. Now place several slices of bacon in the pan, sufficient to make plenty of fat; or use sweet butter, if you have and prefer it. When the bacon is browned, remove to platter, and drop the fish in the sizzling fat, one by one. Fish were previously salted. Do not attempt to fry too many at once. When brown upon one side, turn over and brown the other. Keep fat sizzling all the time, by adding fuel, twig by twig, or drawing fresh coals under the pan. If you lack frying material at any time add butter or more fat. The secret of proper frying is plenty of heat. Never let the fat cool. If you have too much fat, turn off just before you finish the job, and brown, being careful that fish do not burn. Eter-

nal vigilance is the price of delicious fried fish. Some cooks roll their fish in corn-meal, flour, or bread crumbs before placing them in the pan: which is all right for perch, rock bass and such common gentry, but I want my trout crumb free and water pure.

Spitted trout: There arrive days when we find ourselves without a fry-pan and hungry for fish; yet without cooking utensils we can manage to get along. Once upon a time my piscatorial partner and I went into the woods upon our annual vacation, and when we unpacked our outfit we found ourselves without a fry-pan of any description; yet we stayed and had a good time. To spit trout, clean and wipe dry, remove gills, but do not cut off the heads. Cut and peel two green sticks, preferably hardwood, and sharpen one end. Thrust through the fish just back of the gill-covers and close to the backbone. My rule is, a fish and a slice of bacon, a fish and a slice of bacon, and so on until I have all I need for a meal. Only small or medium-sized fish should be used, and consequently the stick should not be overly large. With a good bed of coals it is possible to cook thoroughly a string of trout in this manner and have them

come to the camp-table done to a turn. A large trout can be spitted over the fire by running a hardwood stick through the body lengthwise, bacon on the inside, wrapped about with copper wire, suspended upon wire in such a manner that it can be whirled, twirled and turned until cooked in every part.

A quick method of cooking trout: There is a way of cooking trout which can be accomplished without tools and which does not require the attention that the one just described does. Select fish of about the same size and not overly large, dress, removing heads or not as suits your imagination, salt as you require. But before you do this, you build a good large fire close down by the water's edge, on the sand and round stones, using hardwood if to be found. When the fire has burned down to a bed of glowing coals and hot ashes, you throw any smoking sticks into the stream, and lay an armful of balsam twigs upon the hot base until you have a layer of some six or seven inches thick. Now place your trout side by side upon the green bed, and cover with another layer of green twigs; over all scrape some of the hot ashes and stones, or simply weigh down with a couple of rocks. Now sit down and invite

your soul. Watch that little tip-up down yonder on the sand spit, teetering and mincing femininely. Hear that yellow throat sing, crazed with the joy of life. From back in the woods comes the dull boom of a drumming grouse. Twenty minutes or so pass before you know it. Remove the stones and ashes; now the upper layer of twigs. There are your fish, perfect in color and form. Touch them gently, for they are thoroughly cooked. Now dine upon trout flavored with resinous balsam. Sounds good, does it not? Well, try it the next time you are out, and may all the gods of the cuisine be with you!

Dried, or jerked, trout: An angler when on a long hike in a remote country sometimes wishes to preserve trout temporarily; so it may not be out of place in this connection to give the modus operandi. The most simple method is to split along the back and remove the back-bone as well as the entrails; then salt thoroughly and hang up on a frame over a smudge and smoke—the length of time depending upon the density of the smoke and your purpose, twenty-four hours being sufficient to preserve for several days; if you wish to keep for any length of time, three days and nights will be none too long. Another method

is to make a weak brine and leave the fish "in soak" for twenty-four or forty-eight hours before smoking. Personally, I prefer the dry salting.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE EMPTY CREEL AND THE FULL

THROUGHOUT these chapters I have held to a principle expressed by a well-known angler years ago: "It is not all of fishing to fish." In this and the succeeding chapter I purpose enlarging upon the thought, and so conclude "Trout Lore." Many a day have I returned from a trouting expedition, creel guiltless of fish, but more than satisfied with myself and the world; upon the other hand, I have returned at nightfall with a basket all but bursting from its weight of fish, yet not satisfied. It was Robert Louis Stevenson who said: "Little do ye know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor." Just what I would say is found in this quotation; though I do not know that I shall succeed in saying it.

THE EMPTY CREEL

One perfect May morning I caught an early train which dropped me within easy walking dis-

tance of a favorite trout stream, for I prefer to fish familiar streams, returning again and again to "fished-out" waters, to the great amusement of my friends but withal to my own satisfaction. A poet has asserted that "perfect" days come in June; but I do not agree: May produces them. The air was soft and caressing, with that peculiar piquant odor characteristic of early spring, and palpitant with the hum of bees, as they sought far and wide for scarce sweets. A first brood of may-flies brushed the surface of the rippling stream with gauzy wing, seeming as much creatures of the water as of the air; perhaps one could call them embodied spirits of the evanescent ripples. Flowers, modest and retiring—hepaticas, spring beauties, arbutus, anemones, trilliums—rank on rank, marched down to the very water's edge to watch the insects at their sports and nod encouragement. In the trees, for it was the high-tide of warbler migration—those beautiful wee sprites, the aristocrats of birddom, called incessantly, "Sweet, sweet, sweet"; while in the low shrubbery the more humble but not less lovable birds poured out their very souls in a torrent of melody.

Lest some one should think my language extravagant, I am going to pause long enough to

assert that one cannot use too many superlatives when attempting to describe a perfect May morning. I rest my case, not with shut-ins and misanthropes, but with red-blooded lovers of trout streams and God's good out-o'doors. Have I overstated the case? Have I used too high-sounding words? Have I even begun to describe a May morning? Upon the shoulders of those Waltonites who know I throw the burden of my defense.

Such was the setting for my piscatorial act; and yet the fish would not rise. Skulking somewhere 'neath the deep shadows they were; flitting live insects nor fuzzy-wuzzy lures cast most seductively stirred them not at all. "What was wrong?" Let him answer who can; I only know the fish were "off their feed." Up and down the stream I wandered the whole livelong day and yet not a fin moved, not a glancing trout did I see. When midday arrived I built my little fire, brewed a cup of tea, fried bacon on a stick, and invoked the muses. Casting with such skill as I know how, sending the flies dancing from wavelet to wavelet, or to kiss the surface of some quiet pool as lightly as thistle-down borne upon a summer's breeze, I whiled the afternoon away and watched the sun decline in the heavens with

THE DAY OF THE EMPTY CREEL

"The fish would not rise. Flitting insects nor fuzzy-wuzzy lures cast most seductively stirred them not at all."—*Page 188*

THE END OF THE BATTLE

"Perhaps this week; perhaps to-day; perhaps at *this* cast: ah, who knows?"—*Page 199*

undisturbed equanimity. What matter if the long shadows failed to usher in feeding time, and my watch admonished me to make haste to the station in order to catch my train? Had I not had my day? Had I not practised fly-casting in ideal conditions? Once again I had faced and failed to solve a trout-problem. Puzzled, yet en rapport with my environment, I reached the little hesitation station well ahead of the train and was whirled away home, satisfied with my unseen and unseeable catch. To-day, as I sit here at the typewriter, looking back over the many years of an angler's life, that fishless day looms large, a red-letter experience. Verily, "It is not all of fishing to fish."

THE FULL CREEL

The scene shifts. It is mid-August of a later year and I see myself standing upon the banks of a world-famous trout stream, before me the graceful lines of a canoe and the swarthy face of my guide. The air shimmers with excessive heat. Birds are silent. Only the soporific hum of lazy insects is heard. The retiring flowers of spring-time have disappeared; in their stead stand assertive goldenrods and black-eyed susans, while in moist places regal cardinal flowers lift

proud heads above the grass. Here and there ripe sumacs, blushing red against green shrubbery, hint that the time for tying up the trout-rod has all but arrived. August is utterly unlike May, yet in a way is as attractive.

For days at a time trout will refuse flies and bait in midsummer; but when they do take it into their heads to feed, the sport is furious. The day in question did not seem propitious; indeed, all signs pointed to a fishless day. Yet trout would rise to the hint or sign of a feather: sometimes not only one but three and four would fairly tumble over themselves in their eagerness to reach the fly. Even my stoical guide became imbued with excitement and toiled at his paddle uncomplainingly, blistering his hands and sweating copiously. I experienced no difficulty in hooking fish; indeed, I could not take the fly away from the little fellows quickly enough to prevent their being hooked. In order to continue fishing and keep my self-respect it was necessary to free every fish that was not hurt by the hook; which I did, to the great disgust of my guide, who could not understand me at all. High noon and hot sun made no difference: the trout continued to rise by twos and threes. At last, and it was a hard thing to do, I insisted on

stopping for lunch and to count the fish. Imagine, if you can, my surprise, chagrin, and shame, when I found that we already had the limit, and that my large basket would not contain them all. I am glad to say that I was man enough to quit right there; though I am morally certain that the guide still holds a grudge.

Such "high" days in August—or any time, as for that—are rare; but in my experience they are more apt to occur in August than at any other time of the year. Why it is so I do not attempt to explain; I only accept the fact. That the fish, on the day in question, were feeding, their stomachs amply proved, being literally filled with small black flies. The fly I employed was a tiny black creation of my own, made from crow feathers and peacock herl. By the way, I have found that fly uniformly successful late in the season.

When I climbed on board the train after that wonderful day, lugging my heavy basket, I became the cynosure of all eyes: men crowded about me and demanded particulars, just "where" and "how" and "what." While I must confess that my vanity was tickled, yet down underneath it all was a feeling that I had, to borrow a common expression, "overdone it." Most emphatically

that great day was not my best day. Perhaps I had not violated the ethics of sport, but I had solved no problem, had employed no extraordinary amount of skill; simply, I had cast the flies and the trout had almost hooked themselves; the merest tyro might have done as well. Looking back from the vantage-ground of the present, as between the day first described and the latter, I consider the former the most satisfactory. Perhaps if crowded into a corner for a reason I could not do better than again repeat our threadbare apothegm, "It is not all of fishing to fish."

So we are forced to the conclusion that success or failure, a good day or bad day, has nothing to do with the number of trout caught. The actual truth may be cast in a contradictory phrase: An angler's best days are his worst days; and, conversely, his worst days are his best days. It is not the catching of fish which is of importance. The day on which we solved some problem, caught a fish that had outwitted and outgeneraled us time and again, looms larger in our affections than does the day when we won a large basket through little effort. Nor is it the solving of problems, the catching of fish, that makes a day one to be long remembered.

I think I hit at the heart of the matter in the first incident narrated. It is the correspondence of the soul of a man with his environment that makes angling worth while. When the catching of many fish causes us to forget our surroundings, blinds our eyes to the beauties of Nature and deadens our ears to the Music of the Wild, we cease to be true anglers. There is a sense in which a large catch is a catastrophe. If a man cannot fill his creel without emptying his heart, then a thousand times an empty creel.

I have been absolutely and resolutely honest in this chapter. To-day, as I look back over the days that have been and, with their memories as constructive material, dream of the days to be, I see hanging before me full creels and creels guiltless of fish. To choose between the two I cannot. I turn not away from the former's gaping emptiness nor the latter's cover-crowding fulness. We need both, you and I, in order that we may be true anglers. "In life be a fisherman."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FASCINATION OF TROUT FISHING

THAT one should conclude a work of this kind with such chapters as this and the preceding may seem somewhat surprising; naturally they would appear in the beginning, though logically I think they belong at the close. After we have talked at length upon the habits of the fish, the tackle employed and the most successful way of handling it, is it not logical that we sit down and soberly ask ourselves why we fish, wherein is the attractivity of angling? Readers of these pages and of my works upon angling know full well that while I am somewhat acquainted with fish and their ways, tackle and how to use it, it is neither the one nor the other that makes me what the world calls an angler. Elsewhere and often I have asserted that I am sick unto death of "practical" articles, even while writing "practical" articles myself, for I know full well that it is not the ability to "tie a may-fly to a miracle" as could Will Wimble, nor yet the requisite skill to place a fuzzy-wuzzy lure just where you want

it, that makes angling for trout worth while. Furthermore, as was emphasized in the preceding chapter, it is neither the full creel nor the empty, that renders some days "successful" and others "failures." Then, what is it?

Says that incomparable writer, Henry Van Dyke, in "Fisherman's Luck" (surely every true angler owns and loves the book): "What enchantment binds them to that inconsiderable spot? What magic fixes their eyes upon the point of a fishing-rod, as if it were the finger of destiny? It is the enchantment of uncertainty: the same natural magic that draws the little suburban boys in the spring of the year, with their strings and pin hooks, around the shallow ponds where dace and redfins hide; the same irresistible charm that fixes a row of city gamins, like ragged and disreputable fish-crows, on the end of a pier where blear-eyed flounders sometimes lurk in the muddy water. Let the philosopher explain it as he will. Let the moralist apprehend it as he chooses. There is nothing that attracts human nature more powerfully than the sport of tempting the unknown with a fishing-line."

We will pass Van Dyke's assertion without comment, for we know that the Lure of the Unknown is very real and potential, and turn our

attention to the lure of tackle, which we know *is not* the real fascination of trout fishing. Some anglers seem to think that tackle, "rods and reels and traces," comprise the whole attractivity of their pastime. While I am free to admit that there is true enjoyment in the possession of tackle, and when I lift my eyes to my well-filled tackle case, with its rods of many styles and makes, reels and lures from three continents, I know that the gathering of fishing paraphernalia might easily become a passion comparable only to the fad of the bibliophile. If I had the wealth of a Crœsus at my command I would gather under one roof samples of fishing tackle used by crudest savage and finished sportsman, from earliest days to present time; and what an educational and interesting display it would be! One can trace the development of the race in the fishing tackle used.

Then, too, the lure of fine tackle, for its own sake, is very real and captivating. Always I have urged fishermen to secure the best tackle they can afford, not simply because the best tackle is the most durable and responsive, but because the possession of a fine article tickles our æsthetic sense. The possession of a fine rod or reel influences one as does the possession of an

old master. The angler who has lavished twenty, thirty, or forty dollars for a fly-rod, perhaps more for a handsome reel, is not going to treat his tackle with disrespect. More than once I have stopped fishing because a favorite reel fell into the sand when I was without a second winch in my case.

A perfect rod cannot be built for a few cents, though one that will take trout can. He who has never had the experience of laying a fly-line with a truly high-class rod has missed something well worth while. Every true follower of Izaak Walton should have, if he can possibly afford it, one truly high-class rod. In any event every angler should own his own fishing tools. In Heaven's name, don't borrow!

There is more in the matter of tackle than the uninitiated realizes. A Leonard rod represents something more to its owner than the mere lavishment of sixty whole dollars.

I advocate the employment of light tackle: the lightest possible commensurate with the angler's skill. With gratification I read that one famous tackle house has put upon the market a fly-rod weighing only fifteen-sixteenths of an ounce! Fly-rods weighing two and a half ounces are not uncommon any longer. Once an angler

becomes possessed of the requisite skill, he is never satisfied until he has reduced the weight of his paraphernalia to the least fraction of an ounce. The man who has never played a two-pound rainbow on a four-ounce rod, say, does not know the thrill of angling. Naturally such rods are not adaptable to all sorts of angling, but for certain fishing they are the only tools. With a three-ounce fly-rod, perch fishing, even angling for "pumpkin seeds," becomes a real and entrancing sport.

Now we turn our attention to big fish, for some have erroneously thought that the hope of their capture is the Will-o'-the-wisp chased by the enthusiastic trout fisherman. The lure of big fish is very real and very insistent. The knowledge that the lake or stream undoubtedly shelters larger fish than any that has yet been taken ever bids us persevere. "Bill Jones brought home a two-pound trout yesterday; may I not win a two-and-a-half pounder to-day?" What angler has not set out at dawn saying to himself something like that? No true fisherman approaches a deep pool, a likely looking water, without a thrill of expectancy; perhaps he has cast his flies upon the same water hundreds of times without avail, even without taking a fish, yet with hope he es-

says his first cast. It matters not where he angles, on large or small streams, always the enticement of monsters untaken lures him on. Perhaps this week: perhaps to-day: perhaps at *this* cast: ah, who knows?

Just when that mythical big one, the fish that has haunted our dreams and dogged our waking thoughts, will "take hold," we know not; we only know that he will. And he does. That is the wonder of it all. The big fish do upon occasion rise, are hooked and landed—the funny papers to the contrary notwithstanding. What devotee of the gentle art has not had the unalloyed pleasure of creeling "the season's largest fish" from some given water? The big fish, like death, is always unexpected though always looked for. Naturally the largest fish escape; that must be so in the very nature of the case. A five-pound trout on a number 10 fly, and then—

I could spin yarns of big fish on light tackle, big fish that escaped simply because my eagerness overmastered my patience; but to tell those stories would be to invite scorn and hilarity—I have not the courage. Now and then Fate smiles: once in five years or so. I lift my eyes from my writing. Above my desk hangs a birch-bark replica of a true *fontinalis* taken last

year; so large was it that we were compelled to seek out a tree with a bole of eighteen inches to secure a sheet of bark the requisite size. I never gaze at that cut-out without experiencing a thrill of reminiscent pleasure. What a battle was that! How the line ripped through the water, how the reel cried out in exquisite agony, how my arm ached! But why continue? You know all about it. Hush! Draw nearer so I can whisper: I know there is a larger trout in that same pool, for I saw a square tail and— But, h-i-s-h—!

The lure of big fish is very real.

Yet, while I know the joy of fine tackle, the attractivity of exceedingly light rods, the lure of big fish, and the enticement of the unexpected, I realize full well that none of these constitutes the heart-joy of angling. As I attempted to show in the preceding chapter, I love angling whether my creel is filled or empty, whether I catch fish or only intangibles. Then, if the real lure of angling is not discoverable in any of the foregoing, there remains something yet, real or unreal, tangible or intangible, that impels us to court the Red Gods. Every true follower of gentle, contemplative Walton will, I know, agree with me.

To attempt to put into mere words the heart-

THE LURE OF THE TROUT STREAM

"There remains something yet, real or unreal, tangible or intangible, that impels us to court the Red Gods."—*Page 200*

lure of angling is to attempt the impossible. Were I to succeed I would have to do with my typewriter what Phil, the misshaped violinist in "The Blazed Trail," did with his instrument. In cold words, it is the Lure of the Open which may account for that insistent Urge that calls us to lake and stream. The Lure of the Open. Away back in the beginning of things, when our forefathers wore the skins of wild beasts, wresting their food from unwilling Nature with rude implement and weapon, they, perforce, lived close to Nature. Remaining to us, through countless thousands of "go-betweens," is that love for the Open, that desire for the Wild. Here, then, is found the true attractivity of fishing. To hear the soft wind sough through the leafless branches in early spring, caressing the willow-cats until they arch their furry backs in delight, is the call that sends us forth to observe, religiously, "Opening Day." The insect life of June, the green trees, the up-springing flowers, the songs of multitudinous birds—those are the things which call us out; not the desire to catch fish. Every true angler is an embryonic poet, feeling things which he cannot express, seeing things which he cannot describe. He who fishes for fish is not an angler but a mere fisherman. He who angles that he

may become proficient with latest wrinkles of tackle is not an angler but an experimentist. He who seeks to collect samples of everything in tackle is not an angler but a faddist. The true angler partakes somewhat of the natures of the foregoing, but, first of all, he is a lover of God's Out o'doors.

ADDENDUM

My self-imposed task is done. For two years these chapters have been written month by month; and the writing has not been irksome: rather, a joy. To-day, as I add these last words, I think I could go back and write it all over again and do the work far better; yet that may not be. For the many words of commendation, and criticism as well, I thank you. I hope you may have enjoyed the reading one-half as much as I have the writing. May we all hook a "big one" at the next cast!

O. W. S.

THE END

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